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## ASPECTS OF THE BUDDHIST THEORY OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS IN BUDDHISM

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IT may not be surprising to see the teachings embodied in the Upanisadic texts lending themselves to a wide variety of interpretations because these texts record the utterances of a variety of religious teachers and philosophers. But it is certainly surprising to see how early Buddhism representing the ideas attributed to one individual, namely, Siddhartha Gautama, came to be interpreted in different ways by thinkers who were advocates of totally divergent philosophical systems, ranging from the most extreme forms of realism to unqualified forms of idealism. The purport of this paper is to examine one of the most important theories of early Buddhism namely, the theory of the external world which, in the course of time, underwent many changes and gave rise to different systems within the fold of Buddhism.

There is no doubt that the problems connected with the nature of perception and of the physical world have given rise to divergent systems of thought such as Realism, Phenomenalism, and Idealism. Therefore an examination of the problems of perception and of the external world, as they appear in the earliest Buddhist records, namely, the Pali Nikayas and the Chinese Agamas, will serve as a starting point in our discussion.

For the Buddha, the problem of perception was one of paramount importance, for he realised that all the misery and unhappiness in this world are due to the unwholesome tendencies generated by sense perception. It produced attachment which was the root cause of most of the suffering in this world. At the same time, the Buddha realised that a proper understanding of the operation of the sensory process would enable man to detect these evils and eradicate them thus paving the way for the attainment of perfect happiness. Hence, in the Samyutta Nikaya, the higher life (*brahmacariya*), lived under the guidance of the Buddha, is said to be aimed at understanding the process of perception.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Samyutta Nikāya*, ed. M. Leon Feer, (London: Pali Text Society, 1960 reprint) (Hereinafter abbreviated S) 4. 138.

The theory of sense perception is represented in the special application of the causal principle, consisting of twelve factors, by the phrase *salāyatana* (*liu ju ch'u* 六入處). The term *āyatana* which, to use a term from modern psychology, means a 'gateway',<sup>1</sup> denotes both the sense organ as well as the sense object<sup>2</sup>. The former is called the internal 'gateway' (*ajjhātika āyatana*, *nei ju ch'u* 內入處) and the latter, the external 'gateway' (*bāhira āyatana*, *wei ju ch'u* 外入處).<sup>3</sup> The origin of sense perception or cognition from this subject-object relationship is described in an oft recurring statement in the Pali Nikāyas and the Chinese Āgamas. It runs thus: "Depending on eye and visible form there arises visual consciousness; the concurrence of the three is contact; depending on contact is feeling; what one feels, one senses (that is, one recognizes); what one senses, one thinks about; . . ."<sup>4</sup>

A more elaborate account giving a strictly causal explanation of the process of perception than the one quoted earlier, is found in the *Mahā Hatthipadopama Sutta*. Here it is held that visual cognition, for example, results from the presence of three conditions; namely, (a) the existence of an unimpaired internal visual organ, (b) the entry of the external visible form into the range of vision and (c) an appropriate act of attention on the part of the mind<sup>5</sup>. All these conditions should be satisfied for any act of perception to be possible. Thus, it is maintained that if condition (a) alone is satisfied but not (b) and (c) there would be no perception; likewise, if conditions (a) and (b) alone are satisfied and not condition (c) perception would not be possible<sup>6</sup>.

Condition (a) represents a more precise definition of the first of the conditions given in the oft recurring formula of perception.

<sup>1</sup> Munn, Norman L., *Psychology. The Fundamentals of Human Adjustment*, (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., Fourth Edition, 1961) 507.

<sup>2</sup> *Compendium of Philosophy*, (being a translation . . . of the Adhidhammatthasangaha) by Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, (London: Pali Text Society, 1963 reprint) 183, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Majjhima Nikāya*, ed. V. Trenckner and R. Chalmers, (London; Pali Text Society, 1948) (abbreviated *M*) 1. 190; *Chung A-han Ching* (abbreviated *Chung* Fascicle 7; Sutra 2 (in *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*, abbreviated *TD*, edited by J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, Tokyo: The Taisho Issai-kyo Kanko Kwai, 1924-9, 1. 467a).

<sup>4</sup> *M* I. 111-2; *Chung* 28: 3 (*TD* 1. 504b).

<sup>5</sup> *M* I. 190; *Chung* 7: 2' (*TD* I. 477a).

<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit.

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This definition takes into account the possibility of a distortion of perception if the sense organ were not to be in perfect condition. Of special significance is the adjective 'internal' (*ajjhattika*, 內) because it is not the mere existence of the sense organ but the perfect condition of the internal structure of the sense organ that is important for the genesis of perception without distortion.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese version seems to imply a person whose visual organ is unimpaired.<sup>2</sup>

Condition (b) is defined differently in the Pali Nikāyas and the Chinese Āgamas. The Pali version emphasises the coming of the external object into proper focus or within the range of vision. The word *āpātha* occurring in the Pali text may be derived from *a* with causative or Class X of  $\sqrt{pāth}$  (to go, to throw, to send) meaning sphere or range (of sense organ), hence synonymous with *visaya* or *gocara*.<sup>3</sup> But along with this, the *Critical Pali Dictionary* as well as the *Pali English Dictionary*,<sup>4</sup> suggest another meaning, namely, "to become clear." The Chinese version more specifically gives this meaning when it maintains that "the external object should be illuminated by light."<sup>5</sup> In the later Buddhist texts, light (*āloka*), which purports to illuminate the object, has been laid down as a separate condition necessary for the genesis of perception.<sup>6</sup> This idea gained currency during the later period that the word *ābhāsa* (light) came to replace the earlier term *āpātha*.<sup>7</sup>

The third condition necessary for the production of perception is given as attention. The Pali text uses the phrase *tajja samannāhāro*, where *tajja* means "born, of that" and *samannāhāra* connotes the idea of "bringing in together" (*sam + anu + ā + √hr*). E. R. Saratchandra has raised the question as to whether the phrase *tajja samannāhāra* refers to the automatic act of sensory attention brought about by the intensity of the stimulus or whether

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> *A Critical Pali Dictionary*, ed. V. Trenckner, Dines Anderson, Helmer Smith, and others, (Copenhagen: The Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters, 1924), 101,2.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, (London: Pali Text Society, 1959 reprint) 102b.

<sup>5</sup> *Chung* 7: 2 (TD 1,467a),

<sup>6</sup> *Āryasālistamba-sūtra*, ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin in *Theorie des Douze Causes* (Gand: La Faculté des philosophie et lettres, 1913) 85. See also *Mādhyamika-vṛttih*, ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin, (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1903) (Hereinafter abbreviated MKV) 567.

<sup>7</sup> *Mahāvastu* ed. E. Senart, (Paris: L'Imprimerie Nationale, 1882-7) 3.66; 1. 6; *Sikṣāsamuccaya*, ed. C. Bendall, (St. Petersburg: 1902) 128, 129, 151, etc.

it meant a deliberate act directed by interest<sup>1</sup>. On the basis of the Sanskrit tradition he is inclined to accept the former interpretation and he rejects the traditional explanation given by Buddhaghosa<sup>2</sup>. His argument is based on the passages in the *Sālistamba-sūtra*<sup>3</sup> and *Mādhyamikavṛtti*<sup>4</sup> where the phrase *tajjamasikāra* occurs instead of *tajjasamannāhāra*. Saratchandra's contention that *tajjasamannāhāra* refers to the automatic act of sensory attention seems to depend on the undue emphasis laid on the term *tajja* to the neglect of the term *samannāhāra*. It may be noted that both terms *samannāhāra* and *mannasikāra* express an active meaning and this is also supported by the Chinese rendering of the Āgama passage which has *nien* (念), a character meaning "to think, to remember, to recall." It is true that consciousness is aroused by the contact of the sense organ and the sense object as indicated by the term *tajja*, but that itself without an act directed by interest would not produce a complete perception. Therefore, the term *tajja-samannāhāra* may be taken as implying both sensory excitation and deliberate act directed by interest on the part of the percipient.

The Nikāyas and Āgamas refer to the six kinds of perceptions, namely, visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental.<sup>5</sup> The *Mahā Tanhāsankhaya Sutta* maintains that they are so reckoned because of the different causes that produce them.<sup>6</sup> Thus, perception that arises depending on the visual organ and visible form is, known as visual perception<sup>7</sup>. Elsewhere it is pointed out that the five sense organs (*pañc'indriyāni*, *wu ken* 五根)—excluding mind (*man'indriya*, *i ken* 意根)—have different sensory fields and do not encroach upon or share the sensory fields of one another<sup>8</sup>. But mind (*mano*, *i* 意) can survey all the spheres and is a coordinating factor of the different perceptions, a form of *sensus communis*<sup>9</sup>.

It is interesting to note that this description of perception is generally accepted by almost all the later schools of Buddhism. But the interpretation they give to the subject-object relationship and especially to the nature of the external object has differed widely

<sup>1</sup> *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, (Colombo: The Ceylon University Press, 1958) 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Papañcasūdanī* (Majjhima Nikāyaṭṭhakathā), ed. J. H. Woods and D. Kosambi, (London: Pali Text Society, 1928) 2. 229.

<sup>3</sup> 85.

<sup>4</sup> 567

<sup>5</sup> *M* 1. 53; *Chung* 8: 2 (TD 1.51c).

<sup>6</sup> *M* 1. 259; *Chung* 54:2 (TD 1. 767a).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *M* 1.295; *Chung* 58:2 (TD 1. 791b.)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

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and it would be interesting to examine these differences and trace the causes that led to these differences so that in the end it would be possible to determine the nature of the philosophical standpoints to which these schools are committed.

Let us examine the philosophical implications of the statement of the theory of perception as given in the early Buddhist sutras. When this is done and a proper assessment of the philosophical standpoint of early Buddhism has been made, it would be easy to find out in what respects it differs from the interpretation given in the later Buddhist schools.

Examining the various descriptions of the nature of the world found in the early Buddhist texts, many of the modern scholars have come to the conclusion that early Buddhism as represented in the Pali Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas is a form of realism<sup>1</sup>. But this seems to be a rather hasty conclusion arrived at without examining the levels of understanding and the nature of the people to whom the Buddha's discourses were addressed. It is well to remember here that a good part of the discourses of the Buddha were addressed to the trainee (*sekha*), to the uneducated ordinary man (*assutavā puthujjano*), rather than to the person with some kind of philosophical maturity. In such cases the Buddha was careful not to drag in epistemological problems and confuse his understanding. Instead, his teaching was based on a kind of commonsense realism, a realism which, according to a modern definition, takes for granted a premise such as "that sense experience reports a true and uninterrupted, if limited, account of objects; that it is possible to have faith and direct knowledge of the actual world"<sup>2</sup>. An attempt to safeguard his own philosophical standpoint by denying the real existence and direct perception of the external world was not going to be of much benefit in the matter of instructing the ordinary householder (*gihī*) who is prone to enjoy the pleasures of sense (*kāmabhogī*). Therefore one may not be justified in trying to

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<sup>1</sup> Stcherbatsky, T. I., *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word "Dharma"*, (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1923) 54; Murti, T. R. V., *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Second Edition, 1960) 54. The most recent research also has tended to favour this interpretation, see Karunadasa, Y., *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, (Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1967) 176.

<sup>2</sup> See *Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. D. D. Runes, (New York: Philosophical Library, no date) art. Realism.

present the Buddha's philosophical standpoint based on discourses which were addressed to such an audience.

On the other hand, we find discourses of the Buddha where he emphasised the fact that the knowledge of the external world is dependent on the activities of the senses. It is stated in many places that as far as the individual is concerned both the origin and cessation of the world are "within this fathom long conscious body."<sup>1</sup> Statements such as these were made with the hope of emphasising the efficacy of human exertion in the matter of changing the pattern of one's own life, rather than with the intention of justifying the idealist standpoint that the external world does not exist when not perceived.

But there certainly are discourses, which the Buddha addressed to the more philosophically mature minds, as well as records of discussions, which the Buddha had with some of the non-Buddhist philosophers of his time. It is to these discourses and records of discussions that we have to turn to in our assessment of the Buddha's philosophical standpoint. These are the discussions where philosophers like Jāṇussoṇi<sup>2</sup> and philosopher monarchs like Pāyāsī<sup>3</sup> figure. In these discussions and discourses, unlike those referred to earlier where the Buddha adopted a realistic interpretation of the world, we find the Buddha, with a keen awareness of the epistemological problems, avoiding all kinds of metaphysical theories and postulates. This attitude is very clearly depicted in the philosophical discussion which the Buddha had with Jāṇussoṇi regarding the definition of "everything" (*sabbam, i chieh* 一切), wherein the Buddha maintains that if one were to speculate on the nature of reality by depending on data available through sources other than sense perception one would be transgressing the limits of experience (*avisaya, fei ching chieh* 非境界).<sup>4</sup> It purports to reject all speculative theories which go beyond the data of sensory experience, thus emphasising the empiricist attitude.

<sup>1</sup> S 1. 62; *Anguttara Nikāya*, ed. Richard Morris, (London: Pali Text Society, 1885-1900) 2. 48.

<sup>2</sup> S 1. 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Dīgha Nikāya*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter, (London: Pali Text Society, 1938) (Hereinafter abbreviated *D*) 2. 316 ff; *Ch'ang A-han Ching* (abbreviated *Ch'ang*) 7 (*TD* 1. 42b ff).

<sup>4</sup> S 4. 15; *Tsa A-han Ching* (abbreviated *Tsa*) 13:17 (*TD* 2. 91b). See also Kalupahana, D. J., "A Buddhist Tract on Empiricism" in *Philosophy East and West*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press) 19:1 (January 1969) 65-67.

The recognition of the external object, which is not 'ideal', eliminates the possibility of reading idealism into the early Buddhist texts. At the same time the emphasis on sense contact, or to use a term from modern philosophy, sense data (*phassa, ch'u*), prevents any attempt to see any form of realism in those same texts. Statements to the effect that conceptions, theories or speculations regarding the nature of the external world should not be based on anything transcending sense perception or sense data (*aññatra phassā, pu yuan ch'u*)<sup>1</sup> lead to the irresistible conclusion that early Buddhism, while indirectly rejecting realism as well as idealism, presented a phenomenistic account of the world. This phenomenistic standpoint which denied a reality behind phenomena was the mainstay of the Buddhist rejection of the *ātma*-theories of the pre-Buddhistic thinkers.

But coming down to the period of the Abhidharma we find a gradual change in this philosophical outlook. The origin of the Abhidharma has been traced to the attempt to preserve the fundamental teachings of the Buddha by resorting to the method of collecting and classifying and at times elaborating the advanced teachings,<sup>2</sup> a tendency which was noticeable even in the sūtras of the Nikāyas and the Āgamas<sup>3</sup>. This process of collecting and classifying left the Buddhists with categories such as *skandha, dhātu, āyatana, indriya, satya*, etc. These constitute the subject-matter of all major works on Abhidharma. Empirical reality came to be reckoned in terms of material (*rūpa*) and mental (*citta, caitta, or cetasika*) facts. After this, it became necessary to give a definition of each one of these dharmas coming under treatment. Thus, matter (*rūpa*) came to be regarded as non-mental (*cittaviprayukta* or *cittavippayutta, acetasika*).<sup>4</sup> Such definitions led to a clear demarcation between material and mental facts. Moreover, these material and mental facts came to be regarded as realities (*paramattha* or

<sup>1</sup> S 2. 33; Tsa 14:1 (TD 2. 94a); also *Ch'ang* 12:1 (TD 1. 76a).

<sup>2</sup> *Abhidharmadīpa*, ed. P. S. Jaini, (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959) Introduction 29 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *D* 3. 117 ff; *Ch'ang* 20: 1 (TD 1. 72c ff); *D* 3. 272 ff; *Ch'ang* 8:2 (TD 1. 49b ff); *M* 2. 243 ff; *Chung* 52:1 (TD 1. 752c ff).

<sup>4</sup> *Dhammasaṅgani*, ed. E. Muller, (London: Pali Text Society, 1885) 125, 206-210, etc. But in the Sāryāstivāda the term *cittaviprayukta* was used to denote a category of dharmas which was drawn up later on, see Jaini, *Abhidharmadīpa*, Introduction, 93 ff.



*paramārtha*).<sup>1</sup> Thus the philosophy of the Adhidharma assumed the form of a *naive realism* or *pluralism*. This necessitated a change in the Ābhidharmika theory of perception too.

As if to answer the question "How is it that mind which is of a completely different nature, came to be sensitive to matter"? the Ābhidharmikas divided matter into gross matter (*mahābhūta*) and subtle matter (*upādārūpa*), i. e., matter which was derived from gross matter, and they maintained that the sense organs as well as the phenomena they are sensitive to are subtle matter.<sup>2</sup> Thus, what is perceived is only subtle matter; gross matter is a reality which cannot be settled by any possible observation or experience. This is the standpoint of the realist. This was very different from the philosophical outlook of early Buddhism.

The process of change initiated during the period of the Abhidharma did not stop at that. Philosophical speculation continued in the wake of the emergence of such pluralistic and realistic schools such as those of the Vaiśeṣika, and we find Ābhidharmikas too being influenced by their speculations. For example, the atomic theory, without apparently any antecedent history in the early Buddhist texts, appears during the time of the Abhidharma and absorbed the attention of most of the Buddhists. The acceptance of this atomic theory created innumerable problems for the Ābhidharmikas, and the attempts to solve these led to the emergence of many conflicting views and hence different schools within the fold of Buddhism.

A very lucid account of the atomic theories of the realist as well as the semi-realist schools is given by their opponents, the idealists<sup>3</sup>. These accounts are important not only because they present a concise and clear description of the atomic theories, but also because they examine and lay bare the defects and deficiencies of these theories. In the main, there were three atomic

<sup>1</sup> *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, in the *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* (London: Pali Text Society, 1884) 1.

Tattha vuttābhidhammatthā catudhā paramatthato,  
cittaṃ cetasikaṃ rūpaṃ nibbānam iti sabbathā.

<sup>2</sup> See Karunadasa, *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, 33 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi Vimsatikā et Trīṃsikā*, avec le commentaire de Sthiramati, . . . publié . . . par Sylvain Lévi, (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honore Champion 1925) (Herein after abbreviated *Siddhi—Levi*) 6 ff: *Alambanapariksa and Vitti* by Dīnāga with the commentary of Dharmapāla, restored into Sanskrit . . . by N. Aiyaswami Sastri, (Adyar: Adyar Library, 1942) 3 ff.

theories which are mentioned in Vasubandhu's *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*. They are as follows:-

- 1 The object of perception is the (material) form consisting of parts (*avayavirūpa*) — the theory attributed to the Vaiśeṣika school.
- 2 The object of perception is the aggregate (*saṅghāta*) of atoms (*paramāṇu*) — the theory held by the Sārvastivādins.
- 3 The object of perception is an aggregate of atoms which have coalesced (*sañcita*) into one unit — the theory upheld by the Sautrāntikas.

The first no doubt is the Vaiśeṣika theory. Although the object is not described here in terms of atoms (*paramāṇu*), but only as a form (*rūpa*) consisting of parts (*avayava*), the Vaiśeṣikas recognized the existence of indivisible and eternal atoms which were considered to be suprasensible and bereft of magnitude. It is only when the suprasensible atoms combine themselves into a group of three or more that they assume magnitude and become perceptible. Thus the smallest group of atoms which has magnitude (*mahattva*) and colour (*udbhūtarūpa*) and which is perceptible is the tetrad (*trayāṇuka*).<sup>2</sup>

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The Vaiśeṣikas may be described as thoroughgoing realists since they made a concerted attempt to prove that the complex whole (*avayavin*), though composed of parts (*avayava*), is different from each and all of them (*dravyāntara*),<sup>3</sup> and is directly perceived. According to them the parts as well as the whole are real. Thus the belief in the unity (*ekatva*) of the external object mentioned in the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (*Viṃśatikā-bhāṣya*) of Vasubandhu, is a reference to the Vaisesika belief in the unity of atoms in a compounded whole.<sup>4</sup>

The next theory is that of the Sārvastivādins. Referring to their theory of the external object, Vasubandhu says:

<sup>1</sup> 6. f.

<sup>2</sup> *Vaisesika Sūtra* iv. 1. 6: see also Bhaduri, S., *Studies in Nyāya-Vaisesika Metaphysics*, (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1947) 143; Chatterjee, S. C., *The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1953) 160—170.

<sup>3</sup> Bhaduri, op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> *Vijñapti* (Levi) 6.

“It is neither a multiplicity (*anekam*) because the atoms are not perceived when taken individually (*pratyeka*). Nor is it their aggregate because (the aggregate of) atoms do not constitute one (unitary) substance.”<sup>1</sup> Here there are two aspects of the atomic theory of the Vaibhāṣikas being criticised by Vasubandhu. L. de la Vallee Poussin seems to think that only the first of these aspects represents the Sarvastivāda theory, for he says: “L’objet de la connaissance est les *paramāṇus*, *pratyekam*, théorie Sarvastivādin,”<sup>2</sup> and attributes the second aspect to the Sautrāntikas.<sup>3</sup> It is rather difficult to believe that there was any school which upheld the view that the individual (*pratyeka*) atoms (*paramaṇu*) constitute the object of perception, for all the schools were agreed in maintaining that the atoms *per se* are supra-sensible (*atindriya*). The view that individual atoms become the object of perception is not permissible according to Hsuan Tsang’s version of the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* which de la Vallee Poussin himself was translating into French. Here it is said that “Les anciens Sarvastivādins pensant que les atoms pris individuellement, mais lorsqu’ils sont agglomérés, sont la condition en qualité d’objet de la connaissance.”<sup>4</sup> The implication is that the individual atoms *exist*, but that they could serve as object-conditions only when they are in aggregates. But still, if we are to consider the two problems referred to in the *Vimśatikā* as two aspects of the same theory, the Sarvastivāda theory may seem paradoxical in that it recognizes the reality of individual atoms which go to form the perceptible aggregate, yet such an aggregate is not considered to be a unitary substance but only a multiplicity. But this aspect of the Sarvastivāda theory has been overlooked in a recent publication on the atomic theory of the Buddhists.<sup>5</sup> Here it has been pointed out that the Vaibhāṣikas postulated two kinds of atoms, viz, the *dravya-paramaṇu* (the unitary atom) and the *sanghāta-paramaṇu* (the aggregate atom, i. e. the molecule). But the passage quoted in support of this does not refer to *sanghāta-paramaṇu* but only to *sanghāta-rupa*

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 6—7.

<sup>2</sup> *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, La Siddhi de Hsuan-Tsang, traduite et annotée par L. de la Vallee Poussin, (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Guethner, 1928—9) (Hereinafter abbreviated *Siddhi* — Poussin) 44.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See also *L’Abhidarmakosa de Vasubandhu*, traduite et annotée par L. de la Vallee Poussin, (Paris: Societe Belge d’Etudes Orientales, 1923-31) 3.213.

<sup>5</sup> Karunadasa, *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, 143.

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(aggregate form).<sup>1</sup> Yet there is a statement which runs thus: *ta eva te saṅghātāḥ paramaṇavaḥ sprsyante yatha rupayanta iti.*<sup>2</sup> Here the word *saṅghāta* is used only as an adjective to refer to the atoms which have formed into a group and immediately after this statement is a pointed reference to the fact that these aggregates cannot be considered as unitary substances (*saṅghātā eva naikā ity arthah*).<sup>3</sup> If so, unitary atoms (*dravya - paramaṇu*) are not considered as constituting *one* aggregate atom or molecule (*saṅghāta - paramaṇu*), but only an aggregate form (*saṅghāta-rūpa*) of atoms. The terms *saṅghāta-paramaṇu* and *saṅghāta-rūpa* are used as synonyms for *sthūla rūpa* (gross form).<sup>4</sup>

Thus, it is important to note that according to the Sarvastivāda theory, the atoms exist individually, and that when they are in aggregate form (*saṅghāta-rūpa*) they are perceptible or become the object-condition (*ālambanapratyaya*) of consciousness. But this aggregate is not to be considered atom-wise a unity (*eka*); it is only a multiplicity (*aneka*). Thus the difference between the Vaiśeṣika and the Vaibhāṣika theories is that, according to the former, the individual atoms go to form one whole, a unity, while according to the latter, the indivisible atoms forming an aggregate do not represent a unity but only a multiplicity. This paradoxical view of the Vaibhāṣikas was severely criticised by Vasubandhu in his *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*.

The neo-Sarvastivādins, led by Saṅghabhadra, seem to have attempted to solve this problem by maintaining that "the individual atoms (*ekaikaparamaṇu*), when they do not depend on others (*anyanirapekṣa*), are imperceptible (*atīndriya*), but that they are grasped by the senses (*indriyagrāha*) when they are in a multitude (*bahavaḥ*) and when they depend on each other (*parasparāpekṣāḥ*) for their existence."<sup>5</sup> This being the view of the neo-Sarvastivādins it is not surprising that de la Vallee Poussin failed to find any mention of it in the *Abhidharmakosa* of Vasubandhu,<sup>6</sup> but only in Sthiramati's commentary on the *Triṃśikā*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Abhidharmakosavyākhyā (Sphutārthā)*, ed. U. Wogihara, (Tokyo: Publishing Association of Abhidharmakosavyākhyā, 1932-6) 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Siddhi* (Poussin) 45

<sup>5</sup> *Siddhi* (Levi) 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Siddhi* (Poussin) 45, note 1.

<sup>7</sup> See above note 50.

The third theory, namely, that postulated by the Sautrāntikas, represents yet another attempt to solve the problems arising from the atomic theory of the Sarvastivādins. Unlike the Vaiśeṣikas, the Sautrāntikas refused to accept the view that the 'whole', consisting of 'parts' (*avayava*) is directly perceived by the senses. Neither could they reconcile themselves to the theory of the Sarvastivādins. Therefore, they maintained that while the atoms are indivisible units, they could coalesce or mingle together to form an object. Thus while the Sarvastivādins believed in the aggregation of atoms (*saṅghāta*), the Sautrāntikas advocated the coalescence of atoms (*sañcita, saṃyoga*).<sup>1</sup> It may be pointed out that, although de la Vallee Poussin has not been able to see any difference between these two theories and considered the terms *saṅghāta* and *sancita* as synonyms,<sup>2</sup> Vasubandhu's *Vimśatikā* treats them as two different theories.<sup>3</sup> But unlike the Vaiśeṣikas and the two groups of Sarvastivādins, the Sautrāntikas maintained that this object is not directly perceived.

It may be clear from the above description that in spite of the differences in the three schools of thought, there is one postulate common to all, namely, that the indivisible atom is imperceptible, that is, it does not serve as the object of perception. What serves as the object of perception is made up of the indivisible atoms. It was mentioned that the Ābhidharmikas, like the Vaiśeṣikas, were realists and believed that the external object or form (*rūpa*) is non-mental (*cittoviprayukta, acetasika*). But this commonsense realism could not easily be maintained at a time when philosophical inquiry had attained a very high degree of maturity. Thus we find even some of the adherents of the Vaiśeṣika school making concessions to this philosophical inquiry and trying to maintain that perception is partly inferential.<sup>4</sup>

The Sautrāntikas, by maintaining that the external object is not directly known and that it is known only through representations, deprived physical objects of much of the reality ascribed

<sup>1</sup> *Siddhi* (Levi) 7; *Ālambanaparīksā*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Siddhi* (Poussin) 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Siddhi* (Levi) 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Bhaduri, *Studies in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Metaphysics*, 229 ff.

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to them by commonsense. This led to a twofold development represented by the two schools of thought, the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra.

development  
of MĀDHYAMIKĀ  
&  
Yogācāra

Once a philosopher has gone so far as to deprive the physical objects of the reality which human beings are acquainted with through sense perception, two alternatives remain open to him. Either he may maintain that their nature is completely unknown and that we do not know anything about them. Or else he may maintain that they are merely ideas and that nothing exists outside the mind.<sup>1</sup>

BASIS  
of  
IDEAL  
ISM  
&  
MĀDHYAMIKĀ

The dialectic of Nāgārjuna and his followers was directed at proving the first alternative. They vehemently criticised the view that there is an aspect of reality in phenomena, an aspect which may be called "thing-in-itself" (*sva bhāva*).<sup>2</sup> Dialectical arguments were adduced by them to expose the inherent contradictions in empirical propositions: the conflict between thesis and anti-thesis.<sup>3</sup> This negation of empirical propositions was carried to such an extent that the other Buddhist schools considered this to be a form of nihilism.<sup>4</sup> Although the reality of the empirical was negated, the Mādhyamikas could not overlook the fact that causality (*pratītyasamutpāda*) was considered to be one of the central teachings of the Buddha. Yet in early Buddhism, causality was considered to be the empirical reality. Thus the Mādhyamika negation of empirical reality would have implied the negation of the validity of causality. To overcome this discrepancy, the Mādhyamikas described causality in epithets such as 'non-ceasing' (*aṇirodham*), 'non-arising' (*anutpādām*), etc.<sup>5</sup> thereby trying to show that it transcended empirical description. Hence, their philosophy may be described as a form of *transcendentalism*. Considering the fact that the aim of Mādhyamika philosophy was to provide a philosophical basis for the monistic (*advaya*) teachings of later Buddhism, especially as embodied in the Prajñāpāramitā texts, one may be able to justify the intention of the Mādhyamikas when they criticised the reality of the empirical world.

<sup>1</sup> Edwards and Pap, *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy*, 150.

<sup>2</sup> MKV 260.

<sup>3</sup> Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, 136.

<sup>4</sup> *Abhidharmadīpa*, 270.

<sup>5</sup> MKV 3.

The Buddhists who upheld a form of realism could not escape this philosophical inquiry. The problem raised was how far the sense datum corresponded to the physical object which was considered to be the external reality.

In similar circumstances, the tendency had been to maintain that in spite of their correspondence they are distinct. This philosophical theory is generally called (epistemological) dualism.<sup>1</sup> The dualism consisted in the recognition of 'primary' and 'secondary' natures in phenomena. This was the kind of dualism advocated by the Vaibhāṣikas in their attempt to solve the problems arising from the acceptance of real external objects. They maintained that the 'primary' nature (*svabhāva*) or the "thing-in-itself" (*svo bhāvo*) was real, whereas the 'secondary' nature (*lakṣaṇa*) which characterizes our sense data was unreal. This epistemological dualism assumed the form of a *metaphysical dualism* when the Vaibhāṣikas insisted on the real existence of the "thing-in-itself" (*svo bhāvo*) during the past, present and future and believed that the characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) were subject to change and transformation (*anyathātva*).<sup>2</sup> The dualism of the Vaibhāṣikas was therefore very different from the realism of the Ābhidharmikas. The acceptance of the unchanging or eternal substance behind the perceptible characteristics in phenomena brought them very much closer to the substantialist view (*ātmavāda*) of the Upaniṣadic thinkers. Thus we find not only the Mādhyamikas,<sup>3</sup> but also the Ābhidharmikas themselves,<sup>4</sup> criticizing the Vaibhāṣika view as heretical.

As a protest against the substantialist and realist views of the Vaibhāṣikas, we find the emergence of the Sautrāntikas who were generally known as 'representationists' (*bāhyārthānumeyavāda*).<sup>5</sup> They did not deny the reality of the external world, but emphasised the fact that it is not directly perceived, and that it is inferred by the series of impressions left in the mind by the momentary object, i. e. *representationism*. As a result of the apparent similarity between the Sautrāntika and phenomenalist standpoints, the Sautrāntikas were believed to be closer to early Buddhism than the

<sup>1</sup> Edwards, P. and Pap, A., *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy*, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., Ninth Printing, December 1963) 149-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Abhidharmadīpa*, 259-260.

<sup>3</sup> MKV 259.

<sup>4</sup> *Kathāvatthu*, ed. A. C. Taylor, (London: Pali Text Society, 1894-7) 1.115 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Sarvādarsanasāṅgraha*, ed. V. S. Abhyankar, (Poona: The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1924) 19.

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Sarvāstivādins. Yet, the acceptance of the logical theories of momentariness and atomism clearly distinguished them from the empiricism of early Buddhism.

While the Mādhyamikas maintained that the real nature of the external object is not known and that it transcends empirical description, the Yogacāra school believed that the external object is merely an idea and that nothing exists outside the mind. In the *Vimsatikā*, Vasubandhu is seen employing dialectical arguments against the realist views on the nature of the external world. The atomic theories of the three schools of thought, the Vaiśeṣika, the Vaiśbhāṣika and the Sautrāntika, are here subjected to the severest form of criticism. The arguments are mostly dialectical. Vasubandhu not only denied the validity of sense perception, but even the possibility of sense experience. He held the view that sense perception is the result of false discrimination. Even extrasensory perceptions such as the "knowledge of the thought processes of others" (*paracittavidāṃjñānam*), which according to early Buddhism was a more valid form of perception than sense perception, came to be invalidated by the arguments of Vasubandhu. As in sense perception, here too, Vasubandhu pointed out, there is a discrimination as subject (*svacitta*) and object (*paracitta*).<sup>1</sup> Ultimate reality, for him, is ideation only (*viññaptimātra*), without the duality of subject and object which is realized by the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> This is a form of *absolutist idealism*.

As against this absolute form of idealism of Vasubandhu, we find the emergence of the school of thought which may be better described as *immaterialism* and which was advocated by Vasubandhu's pupil Dinnaga. In his *Ālambanaparīkṣā*,<sup>3</sup> Dinnaga too examines the atomic theories of the realist schools mentioned above. But the arguments that he adduces against these theories are mostly epistemological in character. For example, taking the Vaiśeṣika theory of the external object, Dinnaga points out that the atoms (*aṇu*) are not the causes of the perception (*viññapti*) of the object (*viśaya*) because the nature of the atoms is not reflected in consciousness.<sup>4</sup> The argument is that though atoms are considered as causes of consciousness, they do not possess the form reflected

<sup>1</sup> *Siddhi* (Levi) 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.



in consciousness because atoms themselves have no form and are imperceptible, although the object (*viṣaya*) consisting of the atoms may have form and may be perceptible. Thus Dinnāga's denial was only of the materiality or substantiality of the external object, rather than of the sense data. What is important to note is that sensation, which may be described as an element of fact (*artha*) and which is external (*bāhya*), is not denied by Dinnāga. His denial pertains only to the materiality, not to the externality of the object. According to him, from time immemorial this objective aspect (*viṣayarūpa*) and the force which transforms consciousness into this subject-object relationship, that is, the sense organ, continue to be mutually conditioned.<sup>1</sup> Here there is no denial of the validity of perception, as in the philosophy of Vasubandhu the denial is only of matter. And his idealism may therefore be properly called immaterialism.<sup>2</sup>

The above analysis should amply illustrate how early Buddhism, starting as a form of phenomenalism, gave rise to different schools of thought such as realism, metaphysical dualism, representationism, transcendentalism, idealism and immaterialism, all arising as a result of the differences of opinion expressed on the nature of the external world.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> See Kalupahana, D. J., "Dinnāga's Immaterialism," in *Philosophy East and West*, April, 1970 (in the Press.).

## THE ROLE OF THE CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS IN THE EARLY BUDDHIST ETHICAL SYSTEM

The concepts of *sukha* and *dukkha* play a central role in the early Buddhist ethical system. The distinction between good and bad action is made to rest ultimately on *sukha* and *dukkha* and other related concepts such as *attha* and *hita*. Many scholars who have attempted to clarify the ground of Buddhist morality have referred to the significance of the concepts of *sukha* and *dukkha* and rendered the terms into English as happiness and unhappiness.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the philosophical discussion in Western ethics too centres round such concepts as happiness and unhappiness. Apart from the philosophical question whether happiness is a necessary or sufficient criterion on which morality can be based, there is a question as to what happiness is. K.N. Upadhyaya contends that the early Buddhist concept of happiness is different from all known Western concepts. According to him the Buddhist ideal of the highest bliss is not the mundane happiness with which the Western hedonists or eudaemonists chiefly concern themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Kant's reluctance to base the distinction between right and wrong on happiness was at least partly due to his view that happiness is an indeterminate concept. In the history of Western philosophy the Eudaemonists, the Epicureans, the Stoics and the Utilitarians have held different conceptions of happiness. R.M. Hare says that the utilitarian concept of happiness is so indeterminate that it has created more problems than solving them.<sup>3</sup> Most philosophers have doubted whether happiness can be appealed to in making moral evaluations on the ground that our judgments regarding what happiness is, and what unhappiness is, also involve an evaluation. Happiness can be used as the ground of moral evaluation only if this term can be said to have

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1. K.N. Jayatilleke, *The Message of the Buddha*, ed. & introduced by Ninian Smart (New York 1974), p. 229ff.
  2. K.N. Upadhyaya, *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgita*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1971 p.431ff.
  3. R.M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford University Press 1963) p. 125

independent criteria of application, that is, criteria which cannot in themselves be moral criteria. Hare has argued that statements about someone's happiness cannot be purely empirical statements. According to Hare we call a man happy not only when we have empirical reasons to think that his desires are adequately satisfied, but when we also approve, to some extent of the desires he has.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, one of the most significant philosophical questions which must be faced in an analysis of early Buddhism is the question whether the concepts of *sukha* and *dukkha* should be understood as descriptive or evaluative. Much of the discussion relating to ethics in modern Western philosophy rests on the logical distinction between fact and value. In the Western philosophical tradition, this distinction came to be emphasized with the development of science and the attempt to conceive scientific statements as being value-neutral. In the early Buddhist ethical writings (as is generally the case with all ordinary language), there is no clear distinction made between evaluative and descriptive terms and utterances, although we can, technically, draw such a distinction. This distinction did not appear to be important to early Buddhism; but if we are to understand the early Buddhist ethical system from the perspective of contemporary Western philosophical analysis, we need to know when an utterance in it is evaluative or purely descriptive. The early Buddhist attempt is primarily to show that *sukha* and *dukkha* are objective and determinate concepts. What this means is that disagreement as to what should count as an instance of *sukha* or *dukkha* cannot ultimately amount to mere disagreement in attitudes, but must instead be taken as disagreements about questions of fact, disagreements which, on the basis of empirical evidence, can finally be resolved.

The Buddha himself admits that what is called *sukha* by others (i.e., ordinary mortals) is called *dukkha* by the noble ones (i.e., those who have attained enlightenment), while what is conceived as *dukkha* by the former is conceived as *sukha* by the latter,<sup>5</sup> In the *Suttanipāta*, Dhaniya,

4. Ibid., pp. 125-129.

5. *Yaṃ pare sukhato āhu tadariyā āhu dukkhato yaṃ pare dukkhato āhu tadariyā sukhato vidū*. *Samyutta-nikaya* P.T.S. 4.127.

a rich herdsman, and the Buddha compare their respective achievements in life, the former mentioning his material possessions and the latter his spiritual gains. At the end of the dialogue, Dhaniya expresses his desire to follow the Buddha's spiritual path. Here *Māra*, (the evil tempter, according to the legendary clothing with which the idea is presented) is said to express the following view:

One who has sons is happy on account of sons. One who has cows is happy on account of cows. A person's happiness is on account of his attachment (to material things). A person who is detached is not happy.

Here the Buddha puts forward exactly the opposite point of view.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning such disagreement we may raise the question: "Is it merely that the enlightened ones found *sukha* in one way of life, while the others found *sukha* in another way of life?". If this is so, what *sukha* or *dukkha* is would be merely a matter of attitude, opinion and preference. The Buddha maintains that one party is mistaken about what they consider as *sukha* and that an objective basis for the distinction between *sukha* and *dukkha* exists.

*Dukkha* is conceived in Buddhism as one of the truths to be understood. In one of the earliest and basic formulations of the Buddha's doctrine, *dukkha* is one of the four noble truths to be comprehended (*dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*). It is said that beings in this world go through incalculable births and deaths in the *saṃsāric* cycle due to their inability to understand the truth of *dukkha*.<sup>7</sup> *Avijjā*, ignorance, is explained in early Buddhism as the inability to comprehend the four noble-truths. One who mistakes what is *sukha* for *dukkha* and vice versa is said to suffer from perverted perception, perverted views and perverted mind (*saññāvipallāsa, diṭṭhivipallāsa, cittavipallāsa*).<sup>8</sup> If *dukkha* itself is viewed as something that can be compre-

6. *Suttanipāta* 33-34.

7. *Dukkassa bhikkhave ariyasaccassa ananubodhā appaṭivedhā evam idaṃ dāgham addhanaṃ sāndhāvitāṃ saṃsaritāṃ mamañ ceva tumhākañca. Dīghanikāya* P.T.S. 2.90.

8. *Aṅguttaranikāya* 2.52.

hended and about which people can be mistaken, then it cannot be something about which disagreement is merely attitudinal.

But how can Buddhism maintain that *dukkha* is a truth about existence, a characteristic which can be known to be true? Is it an ontological feature of the universe, or is it a fact about human minds? In order to answer these questions we need to examine carefully the use of these terms in the early Buddhist teachings.

The Buddha's teaching has, as its ultimate goal, the cessation of *dukkha*. It is also important to note that this cessation is possible in this life itself. The Buddha and the *arahants* who followed him are said to have put an end to *dukkha* in this life itself and to have won the supreme happiness of *Nibbāna*. Now, such a situation would not be possible if *dukkha* were taken as an ontological characteristic of the universe. The Buddha speaks of *sukha* and *dukkha* as terms which have meaning relative to human subjects and human experience. The objective world of material things can causally be related to the experiences of *sukha* and *dukkha* which beings have, but those things cannot in themselves, be *sukha* or *dukkha*. It is possible, according to early Buddhism, to specify the empirical conditions under which *sukha* and *dukkha* are produced. The twelve fold formula of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, for instance, is an attempt to specify those empirically observable conditions.

*Dukkha*, according to early Buddhism, is often said to be one of the three fundamental characteristics of *Sam-sāric* existence. The Buddha analyses the entirety of existence (*sabbam*) into the senses and their respective sense objects, as the eye and visible forms, the ear and audible sounds, etc. With regard to all these factors of existence it is said that impermanence is a universal characteristic (*anicca*).<sup>9</sup> The Pali *Nikāyas* consist of many discourses which repeatedly emphasize the characteristic of *anicca*, universally applicable to factors of existence in whatever manner they are analyzed, whether into the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*), the twelve spheres of sense (*dvādasāyatānāni*) or the eighteen elements (*aṭṭhā-*

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9. *Samyuttanikāya* 3.22f; 4.1f.

*rasadhātuyo*). It is said that whatever is *anicca* is *dukkha* (*yadaniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ*). Does this signify a logical entailment, or does it signify an evaluation of the facts?

There is likely to be no disagreement about the fact that impermanence is a perceptible characteristic of empirical things. Given that impermanence is a perceptible characteristic of things, does it follow logically that *dukkha* is also a characteristic of things? This can be so only if *yad aniccāṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ* can be considered as an analytic statement.

Paul Dahlke, for instance, interprets the relationship between transiency and *dukkha* as an analytic one. According to him, 'sorrow' (*dukkha*) in Buddhism, is one with transiency (*anicca*), and is considered as self evident.<sup>10</sup> It seems highly unreasonable, however, to suggest that it was taken as a self-evident proposition by the Buddha. If it were analytic, then the fact of *dukkha* would have to follow from the fact of *anicca* just as 'this is a rectangle' follows from the premise 'this is a rectilinear figure, all angles of which are 90°'. We suggest instead that the Buddha's statement '*yad aniccāṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ*' is better understood neither as an ontological fact entailed by the premise that all empirical things are impermanent nor as an evaluation of human experience, but as a matter of psychological fact which is true given also the condition that we have the ordinary psychological dispositions such as attachment to, and the grasping of, impermanent things.

In early Buddhism, the concept of *anicca* in no way includes the concept of *dukkha* so that by an analysis of the concept of *anicca* alone, we could make an inference to *dukkha*. The relationship between *anicca* and *dukkha* is a contingent psychological relationship. It is the presence of a certain psychological attitude towards the impermanent things in the world that, according to Buddhism, leads to *dukkha*. Once the disturbing passions and the ceaseless thirst for the possession and enjoyment of impermanent things is completely got rid of, there occurs the happiness which early Buddhism called the happiness of

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10. Paul Dahlke, *Buddhist Essays*. Translated from the German by Bhikkhu Silacara (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London 1908), p.69f.

*Nibbāna*. If *dukkha* is conceived as a necessary truth following from the empirical premise that everything is *anicca* then no one can be said to overcome *dukkha* in this life itself, no more than one can be said to be able to square the circle.

The Buddha's attempt is to bring about a change in the human attitude which leads to *dukkha* stemming from our contact with the impermanent things of the world. *Dukkha* is causally conditioned. The elimination of the causes leads to the cessation of it. The Buddha's view is clearly represented by the following statement made by Sāriputta, one of the Buddha's chief disciples, in attempting to describe the attitude of the emancipated person towards the five aggregates of personality:

He says not, 'I am body'; he says not, 'body is mine', nor is he possessed by this idea. As he is not so possessed, when body alters and changes, owing to the unstable and changeful nature of body, then sorrow and grief, woe, lamentation and despair do not arise in him.<sup>11</sup>

There is, however, another significant aspect to the concept of *dukkha* in early Buddhism. The psychological factors which cause unhappiness in this life, are precisely the factors that bring about a continued series of existence in *saṃsāra*. The Buddhist view is that *saṃsāric* existence brings along with it a whole mass of *dukkha*, which in the formulation of the four noble truths is described as follows:

Birth is *dukkha*, decay is *dukkha*, sickness is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*, association with those that one does not like is *dukkha*, separation from the beloved is *dukkha*, not getting what one wants is *dukkha*, in brief the five aggregates of grasping are *dukkha*.<sup>12</sup>

When examined closely the life of sense pleasures is said to consist of three aspects all of which, a realistic assessment of human experience should not fail to take into account. Mundane life has its pleasures (*assāda*), the

11. *Saṃyuttanikāya* 3.3f.

12. *Ibid.* 5.421.

aspect which the Buddha classified under *kāmasukha*. It also has its harmful consequences (*ādīnava*) and there is a possibility of transcending this lower level of happiness which is not really satisfying, and attaining a higher level of happiness. This is called *nissaraṇa* or freedom from the harmful consequences of the lower forms of happiness. With reference to the common pleasures of sense the Buddha says that they consist of little delight and much unhappiness and anxiety (*appaṣādā kāmā, bahudukkhā bahū-pāyāsā ādīnavo ettha bhīyyo*). When birth, old age and sickness are given as instances of human suffering, they are interpreted in the Buddhist tradition mainly in terms of the physical suffering involved. What is of greater importance for early Buddhism, however, is the mental suffering involved in the life of an unenlightened being. Such beings are said to suffer constantly from psychological disease (*cetasika roga*), whereas the mind of the person who has attained *Nibbāna* is said to be healthy (*anītika*). The question whether one who has attained *Nibbāna* is happy or not, is considered, not as an evaluative question, but as a psychological question which may be examined on the basis of behavioural criteria or on the basis of introspection.

In psychological terms, early Buddhism makes the judgment that the experience of life, when considered on the whole, in its unenlightened condition is *dukkha*. It appears that the basis of such a judgment is a hedonic criterion and not an evaluation. It is intended to be an empirically justifiable interpretation of human experience and not a mere expression of an attitude towards the facts of life.

The Buddhist attainment of the perfectly happy state, which results from the complete elimination of passion, thirst for sensuous enjoyment, and grasping after the impermanent things of the world is also said to be the point at which the whole cyclic process of *samsāra* is said to come to an end. The Buddha himself joyfully claimed after his enlightenment: "It is my last birth, and there will not be any becoming again (*āyamantimā jāti natthidāni punabbhavo*). Thus *Nibbāna* is positively the attainment of a blissful existence, free from the afflictions of lust, hatred and delusion, and negatively an ending of the conditions leading to the recurrence of the process which brings



along with it birth, old age, disease, death and other physical and mental afflictions. This is the *attha*, *hita* and *sukha* in the highest sense that the Buddha declared to be valid for all human beings. Anyone who believes some state other than this to be the true and highest wellbeing or happiness of man is, according to the Buddha, mistaken.

*Sukha* is often represented as an experiential state the continuance of which is desired. According to the Buddha, such a state can arise from various conditions. One commonly acknowledged source of such *sukha* is sense-perception. In the *Vedanāsaṃyutta*, the Buddha makes certain clarifications about his view regarding *sukha* which are of importance in understanding the Buddhist concept. The Buddha speaks here of several levels of *sukha*, one higher than the other, implying that it is possible to make qualitative distinctions within *sukha* itself.

He says:

... There are these five strands of sensuous desire ... There are material shapes cognizable by the eye, delightful, agreeable, pleasant, lovely, associated with sensuous desire and alluring, sounds cognizable by the ear, ... smells cognizable by the nose ... tastes cognizable by the tongue ... touches cognizable by the body ... These are the five strands of sensuous desire. Whatever pleasure happiness (*sukha*, *somanassa*) arises due to these five strands of sensuous desire, this is called the happiness of sensuous desires (*kāmasukhaṃ*). But with regard to those who may say thus: 'This is the highest pleasure, happiness that living beings experience', I do not agree with that view of theirs. What is the reason for this? ... For there is a happiness which is more delightful and more pleasant than this.<sup>13</sup>

This other form of happiness is explained by the Buddha as the happiness resulting from the withdrawal of the mind from sense-pleasures and attaining the different levels of *samādhi*. Here the Buddha enumerates several levels of *samādhi* in which the *sukha* experienced at each succeeding level is more delightful and pleasant than that

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13. Ibid, 4.225ff.

experienced at the preceding level. The quality of the experience is to be known experientially by the individual himself. The basis for saying that one experiential state is more pleasant than another is to be found in the experience itself. For, a person who is acquainted with both finds one more pleasant than the other. The use of *sukha* and *dukkha* in such instances implies both that there is a phenomenologically distinct experience in such situations and that it is liked by those who experience it. The Buddha considered these experiences as pleasurable, yet not involving the harmful consequences that sense pleasures would involve. They were therefore recommended for his disciples as the abodes of pleasurable experience available here and now (*diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārā*).

The Buddha assigns the lowest status to *sukha* derived from the gratification of sense desires. He does not reject the fact that *sukha* results from such gratification. The fact that he wishes to emphasize is that his wider vision of reality leads him to assign a very inferior status to such *sukha*. Considering the consequences of enslavement and bondage to such *sukha* by the ignorant who do not recognize a more stable and secure *sukha*, it should be avoided. The Buddha does not wish to condemn the *sukha* attained by the gratification of sensuous desires merely because it is gratification of sensuous desires but because of its tendency to make man a slave to passions and to blind him to the more stable and secure happiness that he is capable of attaining. As against his contemporaries who shunned *sukha* altogether, the Buddha claims: "Why should I fear such *sukha* which is apart from sensuous desires and evil and immoral states" (*kiṃ nu kho ahaṃ tassa sukhasa bhāyāmi aññatreva kāmehi aññatra pāpakehi akusalehi dhammehi*).<sup>14</sup> The Buddha does not condemn *sukha* provided it does not have any harmful consequences. The harmfulness (*ādīnava*) and harmlessness (*anādīnava*) of *sukha* is the basis on which one kind of *sukha* is valued in Buddhism over the other. But the harmfulness itself in turn is to be judged on what future *sukha* or *dukkha* one will have to experience as a consequence of one's present indulgence in some form of activity from which he derives his *sukha*.

The Buddha's reasons for assigning a low status to

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14. *Majjhimnikāya* 1.247

sense pleasures is very clearly illustrated in the *Māgandhiyasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. Here the Buddha says:

Māgandhiya, when I was formerly a householder, I lived endowed with and provided with the five strands of sensuous desire, with material shapes cognizable by the eye agreeable, pleasant ... But later having known as it really is, the origin, the cessation, the enjoyment, the harmful consequence of and the emancipation from sensuous desires themselves, I abandoned the thirst for sensuous pleasures, got rid of the affliction from sensuous desires, and having become devoid of thirst I live with a mind inwardly calmed. I see other beings who are not free from passion for sensuous enjoyment being consumed by the affliction of sense desires, excited by sense desires. I do not envy them, I do not delight therein. And why is that so? Māgandhiya, this delight which is free from sensuous desires, and free from *akusala* states, stays even surpassing the divine *sukha*. Delighting in this delight I do not envy the lower, nor do I delight therein.<sup>15</sup>

Although there is *sukha* in sensuous things, viewed from a wider perspective and taking into consideration their long range consequences, they are *dukkha*. This is to say that they give rise to frustration, anxiety, dissatisfaction, mental confusion and instability. The wider understanding of the nature of sense pleasures and the realization of a happiness which transcends the meagre happiness which is found in sensuous delight leads the Buddha to take a different view of them. So the Buddha declares, as a universal fact true in the past, present and the future, that indulgence in sensuous desires eventually gives rise to unpleasant experience.

In the past sense desires gave rise to unpleasant sensation, they were immensely afflicting, immensely painful; in the present they are ... and in the future they will be ... These beings not free from their passions for sensuous things being consumed by the thirst for sensuous things, being afflicted by the affliction of sensuous things with their sense-organs adversely

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15. Ibid. 1.506.

affected, take a perverted notion of sensuous things whose contact is painful by taking them as pleasurable.

Māgandhiya, it is like a leper, a man with his limbs all ravaged and festering, and being eaten by vermin tearing his open sores with his nails heats his body over a charcoal pit, the more those open sores of his become septic, foul smelling, putrefying and there is only a meagre relief and satisfaction to be had from scratching the open sores.<sup>16</sup>

Thus while admitting certain things as certainly productive of a kind of *sukha*, the Buddha at the same time emphasizes another aspect of reality associated with them. Ultimately, the happiness of sensuous desires leads to more *dukkha*, and the *sukha* that seemed to be there is said to be deceptive and mirage-like. The *sukha* derived from sense pleasures is described as a "vile *sukha*, the *sukha* of the ordinary, an ignoble *sukha*" (*mīḷhasukhaṃ, puthujjanasukhaṃ anariyasukhaṃ*).

The Buddha makes the claim that a person who experiences the happiness of passionless *Nibbāna* will find that it is eternally satisfying and that he will not fall back on the transient pleasures of ordinary life. In order to appreciate the value of such *sukha* one has to experience it oneself. Speaking of his own experience of other pleasures that life can afford and the happiness of *Nibbāna*, the Buddha says that the enjoyment of the pleasures of a sensuous kind are comparable to the infant's play with his own excrements, when viewed from the standpoint of the experience of *Nibbāna*.

"Just as, Upāli, an infant, feeble and lying on his back, plays with his own excrements, what do you think Upāli, is this not fully and entirely a childish sport?"

"It is, Sir."

"Well then, Upāli, that boy, on another occasion, when he has grown older, with the maturity of the

sense faculties, plays with whatever may be the play-things of such children ... Now what do you think, Upāli? Does not this sport come to be finer and more valued than the former?"

"It does, Sir."

From this point onwards the Buddha describes the spiritual attainments of the person who leads the holy life, as it was laid down by him, and assures Upāli that in each of these higher stages of spiritual attainment there is a more preferable experience.<sup>17</sup>

What becomes evident from the above is that the Buddha, like Mill, admitted qualitative distinctions within *sukha* itself. The experience of happiness in the spiritual attainments transcending the sphere of sense pleasures was considered to be higher (*uttaritarāṃ*). It is also evident that the Buddha made moral distinctions within happiness itself as noble happiness (*ariyasukha*) and ignoble happiness (*anariyasukha*). This shows that the Buddha considered *sukha* itself as a non-evaluative term, which can be qualified evaluatively as *ariya* or *anariya*.

One reason why most philosophers object to taking pleasure or happiness as a criterion of moral evaluation is that pleasure or happiness itself may be morally evaluated as right or wrong. The question here is whether early Buddhism distinguishes between *sukha* that ought to be abandoned and *sukha* that ought to be cultivated, on some moral criterion which is not, in turn, established on the basis of *sukha* and *dukkha*. The evidence in the Buddhist writings seems to be in favour of saying that one form of *sukha* is to be valued over another, not in terms of a *sui generis* moral quality, but in terms of the nature of the *sukha* itself. As we have already mentioned, some conditions under which *sukha* is experienced can be productive of much greater *dukkha* when considered from the point of view of their long range consequences. At the same time, abandoning the immediate pleasures of a sensuous nature, and even with displeasure for the moment, one may perform certain deeds which conduce to his real happiness. Such actions, though involving immediate displeasure, are called *kusala* in Buddhism.

The fact that there are certain modes of life which give pleasure in the present but lead to much suffering in the future is much emphasised by the Buddha. In the *Majjhimanikāya*, the Buddha makes four distinctions between ways of life undertaken by people in terms of the happiness that they find in them in the present and their inevitable consequences in the future as follows:

1. Undertaking a way of life involving unhappiness in the present and productive of unhappiness in the future (*dhammasamādānaṃ paccuppannadukkhaṃ āyatīṇca dukkhavipākaṃ*), e.g., the case of a person who even with unhappiness, even with grief, becomes one who kills living beings, and on account of killing living beings, experiences unhappiness. Such a person is said to be reborn in hell, or a woeful existence after his death.
2. Undertaking of a way of life involving happiness in the present but productive of unhappiness in the future (*dhammasamādānaṃ paccuppannasukhaṃ āyatīṃ dukkhavipākaṃ*), e.g., the case of a person who even with happiness, even with pleasure, kills living beings, and on account of killing living beings experiences happiness and pleasure. Such a person too is said to be reborn in hell or a woeful existence after death.
3. Undertaking of a way of life involving unhappiness in the present but productive of happiness in the future (*dhammasamādānaṃ paccuppannadukkhaṃ āyatīṃ sukhavipākaṃ*), e.g., the case of a person who even with unhappiness, even with grief abstains from killing living beings, and on account of his abstention from killing living beings experiences unhappiness and grief. Such a person is said to be reborn in a happy state of existence after death.
4. Undertaking of a way of life involving happiness in the present and productive of happiness in the future (*dhammasamādānaṃ paccuppannasukhaṃ āyatīṇca sukhavipākaṃ*), e.g., the case of a person who even with happiness, even with pleasure abstains from killing living beings and on account of abstention

from killing living beings he experiences happiness and pleasure. Such a person too is said to be reborn in a happy state of existence after death.<sup>18</sup>

What is evident from the above is that early Buddhism recognizes the possibility of making a distinction between being happy by doing the right thing and being happy by doing the wrong thing. In other words some *sukha* can be *akusala*. What makes one thing wrong and another right is that one involves a far greater sum of unhappy consequences in the future even though one may take pleasure in doing it in the present, while the other involves happy consequences in the future even though one may or may not take pleasure in it in the present. In using happiness as a criterion for valuing different modes of life, the Buddha appears to be applying the hedonic calculus over a wider range of an individual's existence, taking into consideration even the future births, in terms of the doctrines of *kamma* and *saṃsāra*.

The term *sukha* in Pali stands for what is denoted by the terms 'pleasure' and 'happiness' in English. Mrs. Rhys Davids makes the 'observation': "The word *sukha* in Buddhism covers in extension both the relatively static state which we name happiness or felicity and the conscious moments of such a state to which our psychology refers as pleasurable or pleasant feeling."<sup>19</sup> This observation is quite appropriate in view of the applications made of the term *sukha* in the Pāli *Nikāyas*. Early Buddhism works with the one generic term *sukha*. It stands for the happiness of sensuous gratification (*kāmasukha*), the happiness attained in various stages of ecstatic meditative experience (*jhānasukha*) and even the felicity of *Nibbāna* (*nibbānasukha*). The gratification of sensuous desires involves a distinctive experience which is phenomenologically different from that of *jhānasukha* or *nibbānasukha*. The characterization of all these phenomenological experiences as *sukha* is probably due to the fact that they are desirable experiences (desirable in a non-evaluative sense). In Buddhism, the qualitative difference between these different types of *sukha*, seems ultimately to be made to rest not on an eval-

18. *Majjhimanikāya* 1.310ff.

19. ERE, Ed. James Hastings (New York 1925), p.571.

uation of a moral kind. The *sukha* of a sensuous nature is often compared with the states of spiritual bliss in quantitative terms and it is said to be meagre compared to the latter. Hence the former is called small (*matta*) and the latter immense (*vipula*):

In the West the terms 'pleasure' and 'happiness' are sometimes used with distinctive meanings and sometimes as synonyms. Aristotle denied that happiness is pleasure. Bentham and Mill considered them as being synonymous. Regarding the concept of happiness, it has also been claimed that the term is not a purely descriptive one, and that the application of it is in need of evaluative criteria as well.

The evaluative use of the terms 'happy' and 'happiness' is, according to Hare, what creates problems for utilitarian systems of morality. According to this view, happiness judgments are appraisals, and such appraisals sometimes involve moral considerations. It is argued that although it is held that 'happy' is a word which is mainly descriptive and tied to the concepts of contentment and enjoyment, yet, contrary to this belief, it is also partly evaluative. Happiness statements involve, to some extent, a report on a person's state of mind. In one sense of the term 'happy' we call a man happy if he takes pleasure in whatever condition and state of mind he is in or activity he is engaged in. If this is the only sense in which the term 'happy' is used, then an empirical account of 'happiness' would be adequate. For to ascertain whether a man is happy we would need to apply only introspectional and behavioural criteria. Whenever a man is prepared to claim of himself that he is happy, that his life's wants and desires are satisfied and the evidence of his appearance and behaviour is also consistent with these claims, we must, if this account is true, call him happy. But an objection raised against such an account of happiness is that such evidence alone will not entitle us to call him happy. For we need to consider also the worthwhileness of the activities from which he claims to derive his satisfaction. As one writer puts it:

Some may be satisfying a large number of wants, but still not be accounted happy if the pattern arising from satisfying these wants adds up to what is thought



of. as a radically vicious style of life.<sup>20</sup>

According to Hare, in judging that some one is happy we apply standards which may differ from those that would be used by the person being appraised:

..... before we call a man happy we find it necessary to be sure, not only that his desires are satisfied, but also that the complete set of his desires is one which we are not very much averse to having ourselves.<sup>21</sup>

One may not call Hitler truly happy even if he were satisfied with himself and really did enjoy life, because one may apply non-hedonic evaluative criteria in commenting on Hitler's state. It is perhaps on such an irreducible form of evaluative ground that Socrates contended that the unjust man is unhappy despite the fact that his life's wants and desires are satisfied.

Irwin Goldstein contends:

Many recent philosophers have discussed happiness as if it were a concept solely hedonic in meaning whereby non-hedonic considerations were really irrelevant in a discussion of how happy a person is, whether or not he is happy, or what happiness is. It is a fact, however, that many people (perhaps all) use happiness words ('happy', 'happier', 'happily') in such a way that they will judge one person happier than another or they will deny that some person is happy on the basis of some non-hedonic, evaluative criterion. There seems to be enough reason to say that *while being hedonic, happiness words are also non-hedonically evaluative.*<sup>22</sup>

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20. B.M. Barry, *Political Argument* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1965), p. 41.
21. R.M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford University Press 1965), p. 125.
22. Irwin Goldstein, "Happiness: The Role of Non-Hedonic Criteria in its Evaluation," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 13 (1973), p. 523f.

By saying "non-hedonically evaluative" it is probably assumed that a consideration of the consequences in hedonic terms is not necessary and by no means sufficient in such applications of the term. This is said to be the case even with Mill's qualitative differences between 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures.

It is because Mill approves of the 'higher' pleasures, e.g., intellectual pleasures, so much more than he approves of the more simple and brutish pleasures that quite apart from consequences and side effects, he can pronounce the man who enjoys the pleasures of philosophical discourse as "more happy" than the man who gets pleasure from pushpin or beer drinking.<sup>23</sup>

According to Hare's view, in our third person ascriptions of happiness, the mere fact that a person enjoys a particular activity and pursues it with much desire and enthusiasm is not sufficient to call him happy, although it would be a necessary condition for calling one happy that he is not displeased with his state. If we take happiness as a concept, the application of which is governed by the necessary and sufficient condition that whenever a person takes pleasure in or enjoys some state of being or activity, we must call him happy, then the most abominable things could be called a person's happiness. For there are no logical limits to what a person may like or desire.

It is difficult to say that the concept of happiness according to Plato and Aristotle is governed only by hedonic criteria. Bentham, of course, thought that it is exclusively governed by hedonic criteria, but his view met with strong criticism on that account. Mill modified the theory, introducing the notion of qualitative distinctions, but his critics have questioned the plausibility of making these distinctions without bringing in evaluative criteria.

In the case of early Buddhism, the application of the term *sukha* and its opposite *dukkha* seems clearly to be governed by hedonic criteria in instances where the conse-

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23. J.J.C. Smart, "An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics," *Utilitarianism for and Against*, J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams (Cambridge University Press 1973),

quences of action are considered in terms of the theory of *kamma*. The doctrine of *kamma* plays a central role in the Buddhist ethical system. In terms of the *kamma* doctrine, even though one takes great pleasure while engaging in vicious or abominable acts, one eventually will be subject to much displeasure, pain and suffering as a consequence of it. For, evil acts bring about unhappy consequences and the unhappiness is to be determined in terms of felt undesirable experience.

The Dhammapada, for instance, says:

The fool thinks it very sweet, as long as his evil has not come to fruition. But when it comes to fruition he suffers unhappiness.<sup>24</sup>

The *sukha* to which certain actions *kammically* lead is also conceived largely in hedonic terms. In the *Lakkhana-sutta*, for instance, the Buddha is said to have experienced innumerable pleasures of sense in heavenly existences as a result of practicing good deeds in former states of existence.<sup>25</sup>

It is the conceptual fact that there are no logical limits to what a person may like or desire that has led most philosophers to argue that on a non-evaluative application of the term happiness it becomes an utterly indeterminate concept. But early Buddhism attempts to attach an objective empirical meaning to happiness statements by showing that there are certain experiences and conditions which can commonly be called *sukha* or *dukkha*. There is, according to Buddhism, a sense in which what is *sukha* and what is *dukkha* can be determined objectively. It is true that there is an indeterminate range for the application of the term *sukha*, just as there is for the term happy. For, some people take pleasure in having certain experiences from which other people may not derive pleasure. If a person is seen to take pleasure, in Hare's sense of the "typical hunting-shooting and fishing square"<sup>26</sup> kind of life, we will not be disposed to call such a person abnormal, although we would not be inclined to approve of such a life. But suppose a man wishes to subject himself to

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24. *Dhammapada* 69.

25. *Dīghanikāya* 3.145f.

torture for no other gain than the mere enjoyment of the pain associated with it (and assume that no other background can be provided for this behaviour, such as his peculiar religious aspirations). Now, we would surely be inclined to pronounce him abnormal. There is a sense in which what is pleasant and what is unpleasant, what leads to happiness and what leads to unhappiness, can be determined objectively; for, objective judgments in other spheres too cannot be said to be completely independent of certain facts about the way human beings are constituted, the way they subjectively experience properties of objects, such as 'red' and 'sweet'.) There are certain conditions of human existence which can commonly be called productive of unhappiness. It is hardly plausible to say that the assertion "torturing will make X unhappy" merely expresses an opinion or makes an "evaluation of the facts".

Early Buddhism recognizes a clearly determinate range for the application of the terms *sukha* and *dukkha*. The evaluation of actions in terms of the *kamma* doctrine may be said to involve the application of a hedonic criterion. To that extent early Buddhist ethics may be said to possess the character of a hedonistic ethical system. But a question arises, however, about its conception of the highest *sukha*, the happiness of *Nibbāna*.

It is in this connection that K.N. Upadhyaya contends that Pratt's remark that the Buddha's system "may be classed as a form of altruistic hedonism (in which the higher spiritual pleasures are rated much more important than those of the body) is questionable on the ground that the concept of happiness in Buddhism is a supra-mundane one.<sup>27</sup> It can, however, be argued that at least in one respect, there is a hedonistic aspect to the happiness of *Nibbāna* as well. In discussing the Buddhist concept of *sukha* we cannot isolate it from its opposite *dukkha*. *Nibbāna* is considered to be *sukha* partly because it is an ending of *saṃsāric dukkha*, and *saṃsāric dukkha*, as we have noticed in the foregoing discussion, does not stand for an ontological characteristic of the universe, but for the unpleasant experiences that living beings have in the cyclic process of birth, old age, death and re-becoming. *Nibbāna* is, in negative terms, the ending of this painful process,

and in this sense it is the attainment of happiness or freedom from unhappiness.

It is true, however, that on the side of *sukha*, the Buddha conceives of a hierarchy of states, with the pleasurable experience derived from the activity of the senses placed at the lowest level. We find in early Buddhism a reluctance to characterise the higher spiritual experiences such as those in *Nirodha samāpatti* and *Nibbāna* as *vedayita* (felt), because *vedanā* is a term so closely associated with the activity of the five senses. But it is claimed by the Buddha, as well as his disciples who are supposed to have become enlightened, that these spiritual attainments consist of positive experiential content. The Buddha is said to have lived experiencing the bliss of emancipation (*vimuttisukhapatisamvedi*). This happiness does not have any direct relation to the causal process consisting of sense-object contact (*phassa*). It is a happiness derived from the elimination of the defilements of mind (*āsavakkhayo*) as well as from the stability, security and freedom one is assured of having attained. The Buddha, as well as his disciples who attained *Nibbāna*, are found to have spontaneously given utterance to paeons of joy having reflected on the nature of their attainment. The happiness in *Nibbāna* neither arises from, nor consists in, pleasurable sensation, but in the total condition which one is convinced of having attained. This conviction is based on the entertainment of certain factual beliefs concerning the human predicament and not on the ascription of an arbitrary moral value to *Nibbāna*. On this factual basis, the happiness of *Nibbāna* is to be distinguished from certain illusory forms of happiness (*micchāvimutti*) which, for instance, a drug addict may experience.

If the early Buddhist notion of *Nibbāna* as the real happiness of man is to be called an evaluation on moral or any other grounds, it may be argued that although Buddhists evaluate it as such, it need not be so evaluated universally. One may even argue that it is not a worthwhile goal to attain, for it involves the renunciation of all wordly attachments and the pleasures derived from them. Moreover one could say, the attempt to use *sukha* 'happiness' as a ground of moral evaluation involves circularity.

All indications in our foregoing discussion of the concepts of *sukha* and *dukkha*, however, are that Buddhism sought to explain questions about them as factual questions. These concepts in Buddhism have both an unqualified hedonistic aspect as well as a hedonistic aspect in a qualified sense. In evaluations of action on the basis of the theory of *kamma*, the unqualified hedonistic aspect is dominant, whereas in evaluating action in terms of *Nibbāna*, the qualified hedonistic aspect is dominant.

P.D. PREMASIRI

## THE BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TO OTHER RELIGIONS

The most important feature which distinguishes the Buddhist attitude to other religions is its tolerance of others' ideas. On this aspect Ven. Walpola Rahula makes the following observations in his much-translated book *What the Buddha Taught*:

"The spirit of tolerance and understanding has been from the beginning one of the most cherished ideals of Buddhist culture and civilization. That is why there is not a single example of persecution or the shedding of a drop of blood in converting people to Buddhism or in its propagation during its long history of 2500 years. It spread peacefully all over the continent of Asia..... Violence in any form, under any pretext whatsoever, is absolutely against the teaching of the Buddha."<sup>1</sup>

We find concrete historical evidence of this tolerant attitude translated into action in Rock Edict No. XII of Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor of India in the third century B.C. He inscribed:

"One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn the religions of others, but one should honour others' religions too. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and render service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one depraves one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking, 'I will glorify my own religion.' But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good. Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ven. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. Bedford, (1959) p. 5.

2. *ibid.* p. 4.

Buddhism spread steadily among neighbouring nations, and continues to do so even today, propelled by an inner dynamism which may be called the power of the veracity of its teaching and its commitment to non-violence. Wherever Buddhism spread it adapted itself to suit the cultural background of the country concerned. This is not because it did not have a new message to offer or a positive contribution to make, but because it had a total vision of reality.<sup>3</sup> It explained to man his situation in the world at large from the *lokiya*, *samparayika* and the *lokuttara* dimensions. The *lokiya* dimension dealt with the mundane situation in this tangible world of sense experience. The *samparayika* dimension dealt with the eschatological situation - how to make life happy in the world beyond the grave. The *lokuttara* dimension dealt with the ultimate bliss of emancipation, with a clear-cut path to its attainment.

It is possible to make this point clearer by citing the traditional episode of the blind men and the elephant.<sup>4</sup> When asked to describe the elephant, each blind man expressed his own idea of what the elephant looked like from the point of his own experience. The one who felt the side said the elephant was like a wall. The one who felt the tail said it was like a broom, and so forth. Now Buddhism is like the man with sight who gets a full view of the elephant. Therefore Buddhism realises that the broom-like part also has a legitimate place in the elephant and that the blind man has made the mistake of taking the part for the whole. So Buddhism would not get into arguments with the blind man for describing the elephant as a broom, but would rather find ways and means of curing the blindness, so that he too gets a full view of the elephant. This is how Buddhism has been a tolerant religion. It conceded to each philosophy the part of reality which each philosophy correctly described.

But this attitude did not prevent Buddhism from asserting itself whenever a false view, which was detrimental to man's well being, was upheld. As an example we can take the caste

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3. K.N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, London (1963) p. 379, 418.

4. *ibid.*



system that was prevalent in India during the time of the Buddha. Caste discrimination was an unhealthy social phenomenon that was supported by the Brahmanic philosophy. It denied human rights to a section of society, while giving undue privileges to another section. In the name of tolerance Buddhism did not abstain from criticizing this unhealthy social institution. Buddhism put forward various arguments<sup>5</sup> against discrimination on grounds of caste and maintained the position that a man's superiority or inferiority depended not on birth but on ethical grounds, on the quality of his own actions.

As another example can be cited the Buddhist attitude to *udakasuddhi*, or the efficacy of water for spiritual cleansing.<sup>6</sup> As this was not only a useless notion but also a dangerous one, Buddhism derided the idea by saying that, if it were true, all the aquatic creatures would ascend to heaven before all others, as they constantly live in water and had a better chance of getting their sins washed off. Thus, though tolerant, Buddhism was not afraid to call a spade a spade whenever the occasion demanded.

Buddhism is a non-dogmatic religion; it discouraged and even shunned debates. There are several *suttas* in the *Suttanipāta*<sup>7</sup> which clearly illustrate the Buddhist repugnance to debates. This standpoint is supported by several reasons. Buddhism delegated only limited validity to reason, as it was no sufficient criterion of truth.<sup>8</sup> Logical probability and psychological truths are of a different order.

Experiential truths propounded by Buddhism go far beyond the bounds of reason.<sup>9</sup> No account of rational arguments can prove even the taste of a mango; how much more the spiritual

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5. *Majjhimanikāya* ii. 147-157; *Suttanipāta* p. 115-123.

6. *Therīgāthā* 236-251.

7. *Suttanipāta* 780, 800; Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 407.

8. Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 404.

9. *atakkavacana*, *Dīghanikāya* i.12 = *Majjhimanikāya* i.487 = *Samyuttanikāya* i.136.

experience of an honest truthseeking meditator. Moreover Buddhism realized that argumentation is a double-edged sword; it works to the spiritual disadvantage of both the winner and the loser. The winner earns hatred and jealousy from the other, and the loser lies depressed.<sup>10</sup> Therefore it is to be shunned on moral grounds. Philosophical debaters during the time of the Buddha had an unhealthy psychological attitude. They were very arrogant about their oratorical skills, and Saccaka can be cited as a glaring example.<sup>11</sup> He boasted that there was no philosopher or religious teacher who would not tremble and sweat with fear when confronted by him for a debate. He said he could harass an opponent as a strong man would pull a goat to and fro, catching hold of him by his long beard. When challenged by him, even an inanimate pillar would display tremors; how much more would a sentient human being! Such was Saccaka's arrogant boast. Buddhism depreciates this attitude and maintains that, by being attached to one's own point of view and by looking down upon the views of others, man creates a great fetter for himself.<sup>12</sup>

There were also debaters during the time of the Buddha, known as *vitaṇḍavadins*, who did not have a point of view of their own to put forward, but merely indulged in eristic for the sake of securing victory in debates.<sup>13</sup> Pali texts describe them as wandering about, shattering the views of others with hairsplitting arguments.<sup>14</sup> They were notorious for praising themselves and condemning others. The Buddha depreciated these attitudes as they were not only useless, but positively harmful for spiritual advancement and acquisition of knowledge.<sup>15</sup> But on the other hand there was a set of educated people, whom the Pali texts describe as *viññū*

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10. *jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati dukkhaṃ seti parājito. Dharmacapada.* 201.
  11. *Majjhimanikāya* 1.227.
  12. *Suttanipāta* 798.
  13. Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 217 f.
  14. *Dīghanikāya* 1.29; *Saṃyuttanikāya* v.73; Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 221.
  15. *Cūlavīyūhasutta* and *Mahāvīyānasutta*, *Suttanipāta* 878-914.

or the intelligentsia, who were honest truth-seekers.<sup>16</sup> They came to the Buddha with an open mind and the Buddha really appreciated their healthy attitude and the spirit of inquiry. Though the Buddha and his disciples looked down upon debates, they always encouraged the spiritual quest and fact finding philosophical discussions.<sup>17</sup> They sometimes went out of their way to meet other religious sects and the *suttas* record valuable *dhamma* discussions which took place on such occasions.<sup>18</sup>

The Buddhist attitude towards the *dhamma* also was such that it discouraged involvement in philosophical debates. The Buddha regarded the *dhamma* as a means to an end. He compares the *dhamma* to a raft with which to ferry across the flood of *samsara*.<sup>19</sup> After crossing over, it is foolish to carry the raft on one's shoulder. Though intrinsically true, the instrumental value of the *dhamma* is emphasized to discourage brandishing it as a philosophy for defense and offense in debate which was a popular social institution of the day. The Buddha was more interested in getting his disciples to practise and live according to the *dhamma* to gain experience of spiritual truths, which he himself realized, than getting them involved in philosophical debates. The Buddha emphasized that man's predicament in the world is such that he has to act quickly, as if his head was on fire.<sup>20</sup> He has no time to waste on philosophical debates; he has to energetically engage himself in the task of liberating himself from worldly misery. This was the pragmatic attitude towards the *dhamma* and it no doubt colours the Buddhist attitude towards other religions as well. Jayatilleke<sup>21</sup> observes that evidence of the texts indicates that the Buddha refrained from joining issue with

16. Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 229, 405.  
 17. *Dīghanikāya* i.163.  
 18. *Dīghanikāya* i.178; iii.39; *Majjhimanikāya* ii.29.  
 19. *Majjhimanikāya* i.134, 260.  
 20. *Saṃyuttanikāya* i.13, 53; v.440.  
 21. Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 407.

other religionists in debate as far as possible, though he seems to have accepted the challenge when they came to him with questions for the purpose of debate.<sup>22</sup> He generally preferred to expound his own doctrine rather than get involved in criticising the doctrines of others. Once two brahmins came to the Buddha and stated that *Pūraṇa Kassapa* and *Nigantha Nataputta* expressed contradictory views about the extent of the universe, and inquired from the Buddha which of them was correct. Buddha replied. "Let that be aside, I will teach you the *dhamma*".<sup>23</sup> Similar was his reply to *Subhaddha*, who came to him when he was on his death-bed with the question whether all the famous religious teachers of the day understood the truth, or none understood, or only some of them understood.<sup>24</sup>

The *Udumbarikasihanādasutta*<sup>25</sup> specifically states the Buddha's altruistic motive in preaching the doctrine. The Buddha says he does not preach the *dhamma* with the desire to augment his following; people may continue to follow any teacher of their choice. Nor does the Buddha preach with a desire to prevent the hearers from following the rules of their own religious institutions. It is immaterial for the Buddha whether they continue to observe rules of their own institutions. Further, the Buddha does not wish to make the hearers secede from their chosen modes of livelihood. They may continue their own life styles. Neither does the Buddha desire to confirm them in activities which their teachers deem are harmful. The Buddha does not also wish to dissuade them from activities which their teachers hold to be beneficial. They may continue to hold as harmful or beneficial any activity according to the instructions of their own teachers. The Buddha preaches to the people because, as a matter of fact, there are unwholesome activities, which, if not abandoned, bring grave suffering not only in this life but in the unforeseen future as well. It is for the sake of abandoning these unskillful,

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22. *Majjhimanikāya* i.227-237. 371-387, 392; *Samyuttanikāya* iv.323.

23. *Anguttaranikāya* iv.429.

24. *Dīghanikāya* ii.150, 151.

25. *Dīghanikāya* iii. 56.

unwholesome activities that the Buddha preaches the doctrine, so that those who follow the instructions will grow in moral purity and attain realization and lasting happiness.

Thus it is plainly pointed out that the Buddha has no ulterior motive of gaining a large following in preaching the *dhamma*, nor the idea of depriving other religious teachers of a large membership. The listeners may affiliate themselves with any religious teacher of their wish. But if they put away the unwholesome activities which the Buddha points out as having grave harmful consequences, they themselves will be the fortunate beneficiaries of insightful wisdom and lasting happiness.

To further illustrate the authentic attitude of the Buddha towards other religions the episode of the conversion of Upali<sup>26</sup> can be cited. He was a well known man with a good reputation in society during the Buddha's day. He was a follower of Jainism, which was another religious sect founded by a senior contemporary of the Buddha, Jina Mahavira. Upali was persuaded by Mahavira to hold a debate with the Buddha on the theory of *kamma*. Upali visited the Buddha and had a discussion. He was convinced that the Buddha's point of view was sound and he confessed faith in the Buddha as a new convert. At this point the Buddha cautioned him, saying that when a person of recognised social standing, as Upali was, takes a decision of this importance to change from one religion to another, he must do so only after very careful consideration. Upali was surprised and more pleased by this comment of the Buddha. He explained that if any other religious sect found a new convert in him, they would have hoisted flags and broadcast the fact by beating drums throughout the city. But the Buddha, on the contrary, had asked him to consider his decision carefully. Upali reconfirmed his conviction. The Buddha then advised Upali not to withdraw patronage extended to the Jains. Such was the tolerant sympathetic attitude Buddhism adopted towards other religions.

The Buddhist attitude to other religions is further coloured by its pragmatic considerations. What motivated the Buddha to preach the doctrine was his sympathy towards mankind. His

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26. *Upālisutta. Majjhimanikāya* i. 371-387.

only concern was to show mankind the means to get rid of suffering. Therefore speculations such as the origin of the world, its extent and duration are of no value to him. He boldly left such speculations aside unanswered despite great philosophical interest displayed in such questions at that time.<sup>27</sup> Buddha defined the scope of his philosophy within the Four Noble Truths -

1. The truth of the unsatisfactory nature of human existence,
2. the truth of the cause of this unsatisfactory condition,
3. the truth of the cessation of this unsatisfactory condition, and
4. the truth of the path leading to the cessation of this unsatisfactory condition.<sup>28</sup>

The Buddha refused to make any pronouncement beyond the limits of these four truths. He had a specific purpose in life and he strictly confined himself to this purpose. He did not transgress the limits of his defined purpose merely to cater to the intellectual curiosity of man. He admitted that he did not preach all that he discovered in his quest for spiritual emancipation. What he preached to mankind was equivalent to a handful of leaves, whereas what he understood but refrained from preaching was similar to the leaves in the forest.<sup>29</sup> Therefore he deliberately avoided getting involved in philosophical arguments which were irrelevant to his spiritual mission. He preached only what was true and useful and he preferred to ignore what did not serve an useful purpose.<sup>30</sup>

The Buddha advocated that man has to seek out his emancipation by personal effort. The Buddhas are only guides; they can only point out the path and each man has to tread that path to make an end of suffering.<sup>31</sup> The Buddhas are no savio-

27. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 484-489; *Dīghanikāya* i. 187-191.

28. *Samyuttanikāya* v. 418; *Dīghanikāya* i. 189, 191.

29. *Samyuttanikāya* v. 438.

30. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 395.

31. *Dhammapada* 276.

urs. During the time of the Buddha there were brahmins who invoked and prayed to various gods such as *Indra*, *Soma* and *Varuṇa* for salvation. The Buddha pointed out the futility of such prayer with an appropriate simile. It is like a man who, wishing to cross over a river, stands on one bank and prays that the other bank should come over to him. However much he prays, invokes and wishes, the other bank of the river would never come over to him.<sup>32</sup> What he should do is to strive hard and cross over himself with the strength of his own hands and feet.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, if a man wishes to be reborn in the companionship of Brahmas, he has to cultivate the spiritual qualities that are found among the Brahmas and not just pray to the Brahmas.<sup>34</sup> Thus Buddhism expresses a definite attitude towards the futility of the assertion some religions make on the efficacy of prayer and the grace of God, or gods, for man's liberation.

The famous *Kālamāsutta*<sup>35</sup> clearly explains the correct attitude an intelligent man should adopt towards any religion. No religious proposition should be accepted as true merely on grounds of faith, reason, reputation of teacher or on subjective bias. They should be tested against experience. A *Mahāyāna sutta* goes on to admonish that they should be subjected to the most rigorous test as one would test gold by cutting, rubbing and burning.<sup>36</sup> It is only when one is convinced that the course of action propounded by a religion leads to one's happiness that one should accept it as one's philosophy of life. In the *Vimamsakasutta*<sup>37</sup> the Buddha invites his disciples to examine even the conduct of the Buddha himself. The Buddha claims to be free from all greed, hatred and delusion; disciples should not take this at face value, they should be

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32. *Dīghanikāya* i. 244.

33. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 135.

34. *Dīghanikāya* i. 247, 251.

35. *Āṅguttaranikāya* i. 189.

36. Jayatilleke *ibid.* p. 391.

37. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 317.

vigilant about the Buddha's conduct and see for themselves whether the Buddha's physical and verbal behaviour betrays the presence of negative emotions and ignorance. If on investigation they find no trace of negative emotions and ignorance, then they should come to the conclusion that the Buddha is morally and intellectually perfect, and not on mere faith. Thus Buddhism advocates the critical assessment by truth-seekers, not only of other religions, but even of itself and of its founder.

The teachings of the Buddha are open to one and all.<sup>38</sup> No man is debarred from learning the *dhamma* on grounds of caste, creed, sex or nationality. This fact is important when we consider the social background of the Buddha's day. *Vedas* were considered to contain the divinely inspired sacred truths, and they were not to be chanted within the earshot of *śūdras*, the untouchable outcastes. The *Manusmṛti*, a later Brahmanic text, asserts that he who explains the sacred law to a *śūdra* or dictates to him a penance, will sink together with that man into the hell called *asamvṛta*.<sup>39</sup> But Buddhism stipulated no such discrimination. Nor did the Buddha teach any esoteric doctrine to be imparted only to a chosen few. Similarly he did not limit the freedom of his disciples by prohibiting them to study the doctrines of other religions. A Buddhist is free to study any religion or discipline. It does not matter from which source one learns what is true and useful.

To illustrate the point the episode of Pukkusāti can be cited.<sup>40</sup> He was a young mendicant and once he spent the night in a potter's shed. The Buddha too happened to go there to spend the night, and the two did now know each other. The Buddha was impressed by the calm demeanour of the young mendi-

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38. *aparutā tesam amatassa dvārā  
ye sotavanto, paṃñeantu saddham, Majjhimanikāya i. 169.*
39. *Manusmṛti*, Sacred Books of the East. vol. xxv, Oxford (1886) iv. 81.
40. *Majjhimanikāya iii. 238.*



cant. The Buddha asked him who his teacher was and whose doctrine he followed. Pukkusati replied that he is a follower of the Buddha and that he appreciated the doctrine of the Buddha. The Buddha asked whether he has seen the Buddha and whether he could recognise him, were he to see him. He replied that he has never seen the Buddha and that he could not recognise him. Without disclosing his own identity Buddha preached the doctrine and the young mendicant was greatly benefitted. It is said that he attained the penultimate stage of saintship.

This episode clearly shows that it is immaterial from whom one learns the truth, for Pukkusati did not know that the Buddha himself was speaking to him. If the teaching is true and if one follows it meticulously in one's physical, verbal and mental behaviour, results will follow automatically, irrespective of the source from where the idea came.

In a number of passages in the Pali Canon the Noble Eightfold Path is declared as the one and only path to emancipation. The *Maggsamyutta*<sup>41</sup> maintains that it is only a fully enlightened Buddha who can discover the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the pure, unblemished path to emancipation. The *Dhammapada*<sup>42</sup> maintains that the Noble Eightfold Path is the noblest of all paths and that it is the only path to knowledge and purity. In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*<sup>43</sup> the Buddha tells Subhadda that there are no saints or perfected beings outside the Noble Eightfold Path. The *Dhammapada*<sup>44</sup> states that there are no saints outside, just as there are no foot prints in the air.

These statements give us a clue to the Buddhist attitude to other religions. Any religion is true and efficacious to the extent to which it contains aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path. In whatever religion the Eightfold Path, comprising the

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41. *Samyuttanikāya* v. 15.

42. *Dhammapada* 273-274.

43. *Dīghanikāya* ii. 151.

44. *Ākāse padam n'atthi, samaṇo n'atti bahire, Dhammapada* 254-255.

cultivation of moral habits (*sīla*), mental discipline (*saṃādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), is found, in that religion there would be saints and perfected beings.

Still other *suttas* look at the question of the possibility of liberation through other religious systems from another point of view. The *Nagaravindēyyasutta*<sup>45</sup> maintains that recluses who have eliminated greed, hatred and delusion, and those who have embarked on a course of action to put an end to these negative traits, deserve to be honoured. The *Chachakkasutta*<sup>46</sup> upholds that it is impossible to make an end of suffering without eliminating the greed for pleasant sensations, the aversion for unpleasant sensations and the ignorance regarding neutral sensations. We are kept bound to *samsaric* life because we yearn for pleasure. Pleasure is nothing but pleasurable sensation. If we are to make an end of suffering, i.e. transcend *samsaric* life, we have to understand the nature of sensations in all their aspects. Sensations arise and pass away, changeability and dynamism are their very nature. They have to be mastered by contemplating them, by mindfully observing them, and this method is known in Pali as *vedananupassana*. When one practises this method one understands that greed underlies all pleasurable sensations, because when we experience pleasurable sensations we long for more of them. On the other hand, hatred or aversion underlies unpleasant painful sensations, because when we experience painful sensations we rebel against them and we want to get rid of them. As for neutral sensations, we are generally unaware of them. So whatever the sensation, we are caught up with greed, hatred and delusion, which have to be eliminated to make an end of suffering. Therefore Buddhism maintains that, for a religion to be an effective means of liberation, it has to teach a method of getting rid of greed, hatred and delusion (*lobha/rāga, dosa and moha*).<sup>47</sup>

In the *Cūlasīhanādasutta*<sup>48</sup> the Buddha makes the bold assertion that the four types of saints, *sotapanna* (the stream

45. *Majjhimanikāya* iii. 291.

46. *Majjhimanikāya* iii. 285.

47. *ibid.*

48. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 63.

enterer ), *sakadāgāmi* (the once returner) *anāgāmi* ( the non-returner ) and the *arahant* ('the worthy one') are to be found only in the Buddhist dispensation. The *sutta* continues that it is possible that a disciple of another religious order may inquire as to the grounds on which this assertion is made. The Buddha explains that the ultimate goal is one and not many and that this goal is to be won only by those who are absolutely free from negative psychological traits such as greed, hatred, delusion, desire, addiction (*upādāna*) etc., and not by those who are not rid of them. Moreover, the *sutta* goes on to explain that generally religious systems are divided into two broad opposing categories, namely those who believe in (eternal) existence and those who believe in annihilation. Neither of these two groups realistically understands the origin of these views, the cessation of these views, the satisfaction arising out of them, the evil consequences entailing them, and the escape therefrom.<sup>49</sup> Those who do not know these aspects of these views are not free from greed, hatred, delusion etc. Therefore it is impossible that they are free from birth, old age, death and suffering.

The *sutta*<sup>50</sup> goes on to elucidate that there are four types of *upādānas*. This word means grasping, clinging, involvement, addiction, and obsession. They are obsession with sense pleasures (*kāmapādāna*), obsession with various views (*ditthupādāna*) obsession with habits (*sīlabbatupādāna*) and obsession with egoistic views (*attavadupādāna*). Though generally religious teachers claim to understand all forms of obsessions, they in fact do not understand all obsession as obsessions, nor do they know the causal genesis of these obsessions. One can only get rid of suffering by the wisdom arising out of the understanding of this causal genesis. As no known philosophy of the day had propounded the causal genesis of man's psychological obsessions in such lucid detail, the Buddha makes this fearless declaration figuratively called 'the Lion's Roar', that there are no saints of the first, second, third and the fourth degree among other religious systems.

49. *Samudayañ ca atthagaṃaṇ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaraṇaṇ ca yathabhūtaṃ nappajānanti*, *Majjhimanikāya* i. 65.

50. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 66.

The *Nivāpasutta*<sup>51</sup> enumerates three types of religious men who have not gone beyond the clutches of Māra, the evil one. The first type comprises those who indulge in sense pleasures without any restraint. The second type comprises those who go to the other extreme of self-mortification. Without being able to sustain life by such mortification, they too become the prey of Māra. The third type is careful enough to partake of sense pleasures with due restraint, but are given to philosophical speculations. They become involved in futile speculative exercises regarding the duration and the extent of the universe, the nature of the soul, and the mode of existence of the liberated one after death. Thereby they too cannot go beyond the snare of the evil one.

This classification gives us a fair idea of the Buddhist estimation of the practices of other religions. Buddhism belongs to the fourth type listed in the *sutta* and its characteristics are the moderate enjoyment of sense pleasures with due care and restraint for the purpose of maintaining the body in sound health, non-indulgence in metaphysical speculations and the cultivation of mental purity and understanding. The usual super-conscious meditative states from one to eight and the destruction of mental defilement are defined as states which are beyond the vision of Māra and his attendant host.

The *Mahādukkhakkhandhasutta*<sup>52</sup> contains an interesting discussion which is relevant for our present topic. An ascetic of another religious sect raises the following question: "The recluse Gotama claims to understand the nature of sense pleasures (*kama*), the nature of the physical form (*rūpa*) and the nature of sensations (*vedana*). We too make the same claim. Now what is the difference between these two claims as regards the teaching and instructions?" The Buddha explains that these three phenomena, i.e. sense pleasures, physical form and sensations, should be understood

- (a) according to the satisfaction they yield,
- (b) according to the dangers they entail, and
- (c) according to the escape therefrom.

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51. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 151-160.

52. *Majjhimanikāya* i. 83-90.

The Buddha maintains that he sees none in the whole world of gods and men, who could understand these phenomena in their entirety according to these classifications except a Buddha, a disciple of a Buddha, or someone who has heard the explanation from either of them.<sup>53</sup>

It would be interesting to cite at least the discussion on one of them to gain an idea of the Buddha's explanation in detail. What is the satisfaction of sense pleasures? There are five strands of sense pleasures - forms cognizable by the eye, sounds cognizable by the ear, smells cognizable by the nose, tastes cognizable by the tongue, and tangible objects cognizable by the body, all pleasant, delightful, attractive and endearing. The pleasure derived by the enjoyment of these pleasant sense objects is the satisfaction they yield.

The next question is: What are the dangers of these sense pleasures? One has to work hard to earn these sense pleasures, by being engaged in some occupation or another. This is no easy task. It is possible that one may not be successful in one's occupation and that is a source of great anxiety. Even if one is successful in one's profession, one has the troublesome task of looking after the wealth thus earned, so that it is not confiscated by the state, carried away by robbers, ruined by fire and floods or inherited by unloved heirs. Great disputes arise among various groups, even among parents and children, among siblings, among friends, all because of sense pleasures. Sometimes wars are waged, causing the loss of a great many lives; atrocious crimes are committed and cruel punishments are meted out, all on account of sense pleasures. While these are the evil consequences of sense pleasures visible in this very life, great are the sufferings one has to undergo after death, if one misconducts oneself with regard to sense pleasures. These are the evil consequences of sense pleasures. What is the escape from sense pleasures? Eradication of the desire and lust for sense pleasures is the escape from sense pleasures. The other two phenomena are also similarly discussed in detail in the *sutta*.

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53. *Majjhimanikaya* i. 85.

What is important for our purpose here is that Buddhism maintains that it is not possible to attain final liberation from suffering without a profound understanding of these phenomena from all these aspects of experience. It is not evident that any religious sect outside the pale of Buddhism has explained these phenomena so lucidly, or even focussed attention on them. The *Maggasamyutta*<sup>54</sup> observes that among men only a few cross over, the majority only run about along the coast.

According to a *sutta* in the *Āṅguttaranikāya*<sup>55</sup> the Buddha was once asked whether he hoped to save one third or one half or the whole of humanity by the path he discovered. Nowhere has the Buddha made such a claim. But, it is explained, that just as a door-keeper, guarding the one and only door to a place, knows that all who enter this palace should enter through this door, so the Buddha knows that all those who were liberated in the past, who are being liberated now, and who will be liberated in the future have to pass through this path and no other. The path mentioned in this *sutta* emphasizes the eradication of the five hindrances, the practice of the four stations of mindfulness, and the cultivation of the seven factors of enlightenment. The *Saccasamyutta*<sup>56</sup> maintains that all Buddhas of the past, present and future realise the four noble truths. It is said that it is impossible to make an end of suffering without realising these four noble truths, just as it is impossible to fetch water in a vessel made of *khadira* leaves.<sup>57</sup>

In the *Sandakasutta*<sup>58</sup> Ānanda enumerates four pseudo-religions (*abrahmacariyavāsa*) and four unsatisfactory religions

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54. *appakā te manussesu ye janā paraṅgāmino athayam itara paṇā tiram evanudhavati, Samyuttanikāya v. 24; Āṅguttaranikāya v. 233*

55. *Āṅguttaranikāya v. 195.*

56. *Samyuttanikāya v. 433.*

57. *Samyuttanikāya v. 438.*

58. *Majjhimanikāya i. 514.*

(*anassāsikāni brahmacariyāni*). The four pseudo religions are (a) materialism, which maintains that death is the end of life and that both the foolish and the wise are annihilated at death, (b) religions which deny moral validity, (c) religions which deny moral causation and human enterprise, and (d) religions which deny even the value of life and uphold a theory of deterministic evolutionism. It is observed that no intelligent man would consider becoming a disciple under such religious teachers as, if their tenets are true, no useful purpose will be served either by following or not following those religions.

The unsatisfactory religions are (a) those where the teacher claims omniscience with ever-present continuous knowledge, (b) those which are based on revelation, (c) those which depend on mere logic and reasoning, and (d) those which are based on revelation, (c) those which depend on mere logic and reasoning, and (d) those which resort to skepticism. An intelligent man would not choose any one of these religions for a number of reasons. On investigation he would find that the teacher does not show evidence of having omniscience as he claims. Revelation is not an adequate criterion of truth. Experiential truths cannot be verified by mere logic and reasoning. The skeptics have no positive contribution to make to knowledge. For this variety of reasons the latter set of four religions are set aside as unsatisfactory.

Having made all these observations from original *suttas* of the Pali Canon, it is interesting to quote a statement made by the Buddha in the *Suttanipāta*.<sup>59</sup> "I do not say that all recluses and *brahmanas* are involved in decay and death". Here the Buddha seems to accept the possibility of emancipated beings among other religious sages. We are reminded that Buddhism also recognizes a class of emancipated beings with a very high degree of enlightenment called *Pacceka Buddhas*. They do not attain enlightenment, having heard the doctrine from a Buddha or an arahant. They are self-enlightened and they have to be reckoned as sages outside the dispensation of a Buddha.

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59. *Suttanipāta* 1082.

Tradition maintains that Pacceka Buddhas do not arise in the world at a time when the doctrine of a Buddha is known. Pacceka Buddhas are incapable of preaching the doctrine to another so as to lead him to emancipation, most likely because the path by which they attained enlightenment is not systematically understood by them. The *Sotapattisamyutta*<sup>60</sup> states that those who have no conviction in the Buddha, *dhamma* and *sangha*, but who are endowed with the spiritual faculties of faith/self-confidence (*saddhā*), energy (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), are not born in states of woe (*duggati*).

Let me conclude this essay by summarizing that Buddhism does not completely rule out the possibility of the presence of emancipated beings in other religious traditions. But it certainly asserts that it is impossible to attain liberation without the cultivation of moral habits (*sīla*), mental culture or concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). Any religion is true to the extent it incorporates aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, and any religion is false to the extent it deviates from this path. Buddhism adopts an attitude of tolerance towards other religious ideologies and appreciates and evaluates them according to their respective truth values. It voids debate and argumentation, but encourages dialogue and open-minded inquiry.

LILY DE SILVA

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30. *Samyuttanikāya* v. 379.



## BOOK REVIEWS

## EARLY BUDDHISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

A review of Frank J. Hoffman's *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism* (Motilal Baranasisdas: 1987)

In *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism* Frank Hoffman attempts to examine the Buddhism of the Pali Nikaya literature which, in agreement with many recent scholars, he wishes to characterize as early Buddhism. Hoffman's interest in Buddhism is primarily from the point of view of the philosophy of religion, and he hopes to clarify in his work certain conceptual issues related to the stratum of Buddhist doctrine which he has demarcated as early Buddhism. Hoffman claims at the outset that his attempt is to do with respect to Buddhism what philosophers of religion have done with respect to Christianity. He believes that better understanding of early Buddhism can be facilitated if orientalists and philosophers are brought together.

In the initial remarks on the methodology followed in his work Hoffman states that his attempt is to describe the early Buddhist religious tradition using the language, the categories and systems of organization used by Buddhist adherents themselves (the emic perspective) as well as using the interpretive categories devised within contemporary philosophy (the etic perspective). He has undertaken his avowed task in five chapters, beginning with Chapter 2 of his work. Hoffman's examination should interest those who wish to understand and interpret Buddhism from the perspective of the philosophy of religion.

In Chapter 2, entitled 'Rationality and Logic,' he deals primarily with the role of logical principles in early Buddhism. He argues that although it is unrealistic to claim that early Buddhism consists of a kind of logic far superior to Aristotelian logic, as some scholars like K.N. Jayatilleke have proposed, it is not open to the charge of unintelligibility. It is a mistake, according

to him, to think that the Buddhist application of the four-fold method of predication (*catuskoti*) makes Buddhism an unintelligible system. It is to be noted that the whole of Chapter 2 has little relevance to the purpose that the author sets out to achieve. For the four-fold logic is not central to the Buddhist doctrine. The Buddha applies the four-fold method of predication only in dealing with specific issues. It is not really necessary to solve the problems connected with four-fold logic in order to make good sense of the greater part of the early Buddhist teaching. Discussion regarding numerous attempts by recent scholars to interpret the four-fold logic in Buddhism may in itself be interesting, but it is doubtful whether it is central to determining the rationality or intelligibility of early Buddhism.

In discussing the four-fold logic Hoffman criticizes K.N. Jayatilleke for asserting that the Pali texts give a formal statement of the principle of contradiction. If what Hoffman intends to show here is that early Buddhism was not concerned with the formulation of a treatise on logic comparable to what Aristotle attempted, his position is justified. However, if what he intends to convey is that early Buddhism was not aware of the principle as a logical principle, and did not make conscious applications of it in its reasonings, he is mistaken. Rational men of different cultures have applied this principle in countless instances long before Aristotle reflectively formulated such principles in his treatises on logic.

The question that Hoffman raises here regarding the utterance/proposition distinction is irrelevant. Even in the Western tradition Aristotle formulated his logical principles long before the utterance/proposition distinction was explicitly recognized. Hoffman says that the Pali texts refer to a disagreement between utterances and not a logical disagreement between propositions. What does he mean by a disagreement between utterances? Is it a disagreement between the sounds one hears when the utterances are made or is it a disagreement between the appearance of the sentences written or printed on paper? There is no intelligible way of conceiving the disagreement that the Pali passage implies in this context other than as involving a disagreement between what the utterances mean.

In Chapter 3, entitled 'Rationality and Pessimism', Hoffman takes up for discussion the Buddhist concept of *dukkha*, especially with a view to refuting the interpretation that it implies a pessimistic doctrine. The author maintains that it is a mistake to regard early Buddhism as wholly pessimistic, and in that way irrational, since Buddhism admits many sources of consolation. Much of what Hoffman says in rejecting the thesis that the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* implies a pessimism is plausible. Hoffman's discussion of the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* needs to be closely examined, for it is in connection with his interpretation of this notion that he presents his principal thesis regarding the way in which early Buddhism should be understood. In his discussion of the concept of *dukkha* he makes a distinction between two senses of *dukkha*. *Dukkha*, according to him, is the more inclusive sense in which "profane *samsāra* in contrast to the 'no arising' and 'no falling' characteristic of the sacred *Nibbāna* is meant. He takes one sense of *dukkha* as purely descriptive (*dukkha*) where *dukkha* is seen as a consequence of change and where the term is used "in reference to a range of experience which is minimally that of deprivation, and which may be that of mental and/or physical pain of various sorts", while the other is taken as having a descriptive-cum-evaluative sense.

The point that Hoffman wishes to draw attention to by saying that the early Buddhist concept of *dukkha* is a descriptive-cum-evaluative one is that the peculiarly religious character of the concept depends on the evaluative element of its meaning. What we gather from what he has said in this chapter is that he is opposed to the view that Buddhism is making any factual claim about the world, which can be empirically confirmed or refuted, when it says 'all is *dukkha*'. Neither the Buddhist assertion 'all is *anicca*' nor the assertion that 'all is *dukkha*' should be interpreted as a scientific hypothesis which might be falsified if counter-evidence comes to light. He says: "It is, rather, part of the framework in which concepts and theories must fit if they are to be intelligible in the early Buddhist context."<sup>1</sup> Hoffman seems to be saying that Buddhism is

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1. p. 40.

recommending a particular evaluative perspective with regard to human experience. In doing so it is creating meaning and value in life. This is something that empirical science does not do. Empirical science is engaged in a mere descriptive and fact-stating activity. Hoffman appears to subscribe to the view that only empirical science can have a claim to genuine knowledge of matters of fact. Religion and morality are non-cognitive activities about which the question of truth or falsity cannot be raised. There is no evidence, according to Hoffman's interpretation, that could count as confirming or disconfirming evidence for the Buddhist assertion 'all is *dukkha*'. It is, therefore, a distinctively religious utterance which is irrefutable. Hoffman is making an attempt here to apply to early Buddhism, although very obscurely, the neo-Wittgensteinian approach to the analysis of religious discourse. A more detailed discussion regarding the problems that can be raised in connection with the application of this method to religious discourse in general, and Buddhism in particular, will be attempted later. But at this point it is important to make a few comments on the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* with reference to what Hoffman says in Chapter 3 of his work.

The distinction between fact and value is a product of recent philosophical analysis. Most philosophers who stress this distinction are inclined to give non-cognitivist interpretations of evaluative discourse. In terms of this interpretation there cannot be truth or falsity in the sphere of values. Consequently, there cannot be knowledge either. Early Buddhism explicitly makes the claim that what is right and wrong, or good and bad can be known. It also shows no hesitation in considering matters relating to *sukha* and *dukkha* as knowable. According to Buddhism one can make errors of judgment regarding what is *sukha* and *dukkha*. To see some state of affairs which involves *dukkha* as one which involves *sukha* is one of the ways in which man's perception, belief and thinking can be perverted.<sup>2</sup> Hoffman would admit all this but contend that truth or falsity does not apply to discussions regarding *sukha* and *dukkha*, for the subject matter of such

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2. *Anguttaranikāya* (Pali Text Society, London) vol. 2.  
p. 52.

discussions is non-factual and evaluative. Hoffman is committed to the logical positivist and narrow empiricist theory of what can conceivably be true or false.

*Dukkha* in Buddhist usage is a description that applies to the experience of sentient beings and it is the Buddhist contention that all empirical phenomena involve *dukkha*, if they are approached with an attitude of attachment and clinging. The relation between the transient nature of things (*anicca*) and the consequent unsatisfactoriness is said to be contingent upon man's psychological attitude towards things which are *anicca*. Buddhism takes the stand that the seeming pleasures of the ordinary person of uncultivated mind (*abhavita-citta*) are *dukkha* from the perspective of the enlightened person who is experientially aware of peace, inner tranquility and bliss, free from the anxieties, cravings, and thirsts involved in the life of the person yearning for the pleasures of sensuous enjoyments. From the Buddhist point of view, knowing that all compounded things are associated with *dukkha* (*sabbe sankhara dukkha*) involves the cultivation of a person's "spiritual sensibility".

According to the *Māgandhiyasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, a person who has transcended the life of sensuous enjoyment and has developed the cankerless state of mind through the course of training consisting of the eight-fold path knows what really is *sukha* or *dukkha*. Hoffman is right in pointing out that the Buddhist statement 'all is *dukkha*' is not to be looked upon as a scientific hypothesis to be confirmed or refuted by following the procedures adopted in empirical science. But the question remains as to whether he is also right in saying that no cognitive claim is made in Buddhism in saying 'one knows as it really is' (*yathabhūtam pajānāmi*) that material form (*rūpa*) etc. is *dukkha*!

The question whether *dukkha* is a fact or value is irrelevant to early Buddhism. However, under no circumstance would Buddhism be prepared to deny that *dukkha* and *sukha* are matters open to human knowledge and experience. Hoffman sees only one possibility here. He appears to believe that, since such inquiries are not the subject matter of empirical science, and Buddhism does not follow

the procedure laid down in the conventional methodology of empirical science, Buddhist statements about *sukha* and *dukkha* cannot convey any significant information. Hoffman is right to the extent that he denies that Buddhism subscribes to the methodological procedures laid down in the empirical sciences. But he is wrong in adopting the scientific and narrow empiricist stand on what could conceivably be of cognitive significance.

The narrow empiricist account of the concept of knowledge suffers serious limitations. This is why it has denied cognitivity to any statement which falls outside the strictly empirical and deductive sciences. It denies cognitivity and truth in evaluative spheres such as ethics and aesthetics, and in the sphere of religion. Hoffman believes that this denial is applicable to Buddhism as well. For, according to him, the legitimate sphere of discourse to which Buddhism belongs is the sphere of the religious.

The empiricist account of knowledge suffers from the serious draw-back that, according to this account, human knowledge is a consequence of man's functioning as a passive receiver of impressions from the sensible world. Kantian epistemology has posed a serious challenge to the narrow empiricist position, emphasizing the role that man as the subject plays in the construction of human knowledge. It is possible to go even further than Kant in this matter and say that, in a sense, what man knows is dependent, partly on his needs and purposes and is not determined purely on what is 'given', or as the empiricists thought, the deliverances of the senses. Even the knowledge contained in the empirical sciences can be explained in these terms. For, the methodology adopted in the empirical sciences is also determined by certain needs and purposes on which there is agreement among the scientific community.

Such an approach to human knowledge would not set narrow limits to what can be known. It leaves open the possibility of new avenues of human knowledge by setting out new human purposes and needs, and it may well be the case that for such purposes and needs a special training of the human faculties is called for. To illustrate this

one may take the example of men who have cultivated aesthetic sensibility and are trained to talk about the aesthetic qualities of a painting and agree that they can perceive movement and life in it. They are capable of going beyond the raw given and seeing a world of greater richness and beauty as a consequence of cultivating an innate capacity that they commonly possess. The narrow empiricist might say that this does not amount to knowledge, or that people who talk about aesthetic qualities are merely using prescriptive or emotive language.

Early Buddhism speaks of a happiness (*sukha*) attainable by the eradication of certain deep-rooted psychological traits described as *asava* (intoxicants). It prescribes a practical way to achieve this, and gives an introspectively observable and behaviourally testable characterization of the nature of the transformed personality that undergoes this discipline. It calls the knowledge that is developed by the person who effects this transformation "the knowledge of the eradication of intoxicants" (*asavakkhayanana*) or the knowledge and insight into emancipation from suffering (*vimuttinana*). The needs and purposes that such knowledge serves are very different from those that empirical science is meant to serve. Therefore concepts such as 'evidence' and 'verification' play a different role here. But it is unreasonable to argue that there is no sense in which 'evidence' and 'verification' apply to the truths that Buddhism claims to know. Such an argument only exposes one's bondage to the narrow empiricist epistemology which results in the illegitimate restriction of cognitivity to the narrowly circumscribed area of the formal and empirical sciences.

One of the central assumptions that repeatedly comes to the surface in Hoffman's work is that early Buddhism, though non-theistic in outlook, is exclusively a religion. Hoffman insists that "the creation of meaning and value is integral to the conception of seeing the world with Buddhist eyes."<sup>3</sup> Hoffman says: "Science explains by

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3. p. 43.

working with hypothesis and test and proceeds towards the construction of general theories. Like the Buddhist causal formulas, scientific hypotheses attempt to explain rather than simply describe. But early Buddhism, unlike science, does not modify its views by taking into account the results of hypothesis and test. Nor does it offer hypothesis as a first step toward a theory which gives a rationally more comprehensive and better grounded explanation."<sup>4</sup> It is not possible to dispute the fact that early Buddhism was not engaged in a strictly scientific enterprise, following the strict procedure of scientific discovery that is followed by the contemporary scientist. To this extent what Hoffman says is acceptable. The early Buddhist attempt was to solve a specific problem, which according to it, has universal relevance. The problem stated in terms of the Buddhist notion of *dukkha* is the unsatisfactoriness of man's unenlightened condition. It offers a causal explanation for this, an explanation not in terms of supernatural or unintelligible forces but in terms of the psychology of man himself, and it offers also a path to get rid of this unsatisfactoriness, which is again in terms of a certain moral and psychological transformation of man. From the standpoint of early Buddhism the causal law explaining the arising of the problem as well as the causal law explaining the resolution of the problem has been and will be repeatedly confirmed in human experience. It is this feature of early Buddhism that has tempted some interpreters of it to contrast it with theistic religion and see an affinity with the scientific approach.

In Chapter 4 Hoffman examines the early Buddhist doctrine of rebirth. According to Hoffman, the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, if understood correctly, confirms the view that early Buddhism is exclusively a religious system, containing doctrines which are neither true nor false.

Hoffman's treatment of the doctrine of rebirth in Chapter 4 is interesting in that it raises some issues of philosophical significance. His interpretation of the



Buddhist position regarding the concept of an *ātman* and its relation to the rebirth doctrine is plausible. He is right in saying that there is no theoretical interest in rebirth shown in the Pali canonical texts. The mechanics of rebirth are not theoretically worked out. Hoffman rightly points out that early Buddhism does not hold that the identity of a person across lives is incompatible with the absence of an enduring and indestructible soul entity. He believes that early Buddhism does not become inconsistent or unintelligible as a consequence of holding, at the same time, that there is rebirth and that there is no soul which is reborn. The early Buddhist notion of moral responsibility can hold despite its denial of a permanent *ātman*.

According to the author, two important philosophical questions can be raised in connection with the doctrine of rebirth: (1) Is rebirth an empirical hypothesis? (2) Are there any criteria in early Buddhism for reidentifying a person across lives? It is the author's belief that answering these questions could clarify the conceptual status of the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth.

With regard to the second question, Hoffman examines several solutions offered by Buddhist scholars for the problem of reidentification of persons across lives. In this connection he takes up for fairly detailed discussion the concept of a *gandhabba* and the associated issues regarding the possibility of an intermediate existence (*antarabhava*). Hoffman believes that later explanations of the rebirth link in terms of these concepts are not fully compatible with or justified by the early canonical position.

Leaving aside questions about the specifically Buddhist explanations regarding rebirth, on page 70 Hoffman makes a philosophically significant point. He points out that the issue of the conceivability of an afterlife is separate from the issue of whether it is factually the case that there is an afterlife. It is important to distinguish between these two issues, for the former is an issue which has to be examined purely at an *a priori* and conceptual level, and the latter, one to be settled at the empirical level. The relevance of the empirical question depends on the solution of the *a priori* question.

In order to test, empirically, whether a person has survived his bodily death, it is necessary to know what counts as evidence for such survival. This is connected with the question of the nature of a person. If bodily identity is a necessary condition for personal identity, then identity of a person across lives seems impossible.

Hoffman's discussion of these issues at this point appears confused. Discussing the problem of the condition for the meaningfulness of talk of 'the same person across lives', Hoffman says that memory will not work as a criterion. He says: "It is absent from all but an extremely tiny minority of cases, except in cultures where there is widespread belief in some form of reincarnation. Even there the documented evidence is scanty. As a matter of empirical fact, then, it is dubious that there are any such memories".<sup>5</sup> The confusion becomes quite obvious at this point. The meaningfulness of talk about 'the same person across lives' does not depend on the empirical truth of putative memory claims. The real problem here is whether the concept of memory is meaningful in this context. Nor does it require that "reincarnation occurs in everyone's case". The conceptual question is an *a priori* one of determining whether under certain circumstances in which certain specified facts obtain, it is meaningful to talk about the same person surviving his bodily death or a person having *memories* of a past life. Hoffman's point that Stevenson's cases of reincarnation can be explained by the alternative hypothesis of telepathy is irrelevant. For, the question whether it is telepathy or something else is itself an empirical question which cannot be settled *a priori*. Two rival hypothesis can even be formulated only if each hypothesis can meaningfully be stated.

Early Buddhism has not, at any point, gone into the philosophical question of the conceivability of survival after death. It has tacitly assumed this. It was not the *a priori* and conceptual question whether our concept of a person allows the possibility of talking about the same person across lives that early Buddhism has attempted to answer but the epistemological question as to how knowledge of a person's survival after death can be obtained.

According to the Pali canon the materialists of the Buddha's time are said to have rejected the doctrine of survival on epistemological grounds. In such instances the Buddhist defence appears to have been based primarily on appeal to *abhinna* (supercognition). What the Buddhist claimed was that in the case of one type of *abhinna*, cultivated through mind-training one acquires the ability to retrace memories which go beyond the past experiences belonging to the present life-span of a person. Of course, the question can be raised whether these putative memories are memories at all, or are mere fantasies. On the one hand, to say that they must be fantasies because they go beyond the independently and empirically testable past experiences of the person belonging to his present existence as a person possessing the body that he now possesses, is question-begging. On the other hand, to make the immediate judgment that they are memories of a past existence, purely on the ground that they seem to be memories to a particular subject, is also implausible.

Contemporary philosophical discussions on the problem of reidentification of person recognize the possibility of two competing answers towards its solution. One answer is that the criterion of the identity of a person is the identity of the body which he has, and the other is that it is the set of memories which he has. Although early Buddhism does not go into the solution of philosophical questions such as which out of these two criteria is both necessary and sufficient for identity, or which is more fundamental, it seems to tacitly allow the possibility to identity of a person through memory in the absence of the criterion of the same spatio-temporally continuous body. The philosophical question that can be raised in this connection is whether this makes sense. In Hoffman's discussion of the issue he concludes that it does not make sense, but the reasoning by which he comes to this conclusion is confused. He has to go into the relevant conceptual issues to prove his point.

Hoffman says: "... the fact that what early Buddhism does or might consistently say about the problem of the meaning of 'the same person' across lives amounts to nought is understandable in terms of the texts treating 'there is

rebirth' as part of the conceptual background of early Buddhism".<sup>6</sup> He suggests that rebirth may be viewed as part of the 'background' against which other beliefs in early Buddhism are seen as true by believers. He finds fault with researchers like Ian Stevenson for considering rebirth to be an empirical theory which can be tested by gathering data. It is important to note that Stevenson is not concerned with verifying the Buddhist theory of rebirth at all, but is impelled by the nature of the parapsychological phenomena he has confronted in his own psychological researches, to provide an explanation of those phenomena in terms of what he thinks is the most reasonable hypothesis to explain them. Stevenson is not deterred by *a priori* arguments which some philosophers adduce against the meaningfulness of an identity across lives. For, their arguments reflect the linguistic prejudices based on the current materialistic ontology. Hoffman's arguments do not establish the point that rebirth should be confined to the sphere of the so-called religious concepts and should be excluded from the sphere of the factually true or false if it can be tested as a possible hypothesis on the basis of rigorous scientific procedures.

In Chapter 5, entitled 'Mind and Verification', Hoffman attempts to develop his critique of what he calls 'the Buddhist empiricism thesis', by examining the early Buddhist concepts of *saddhā* and *abhinna*. He finds fault with K.N. Jayatilleke for maintaining a distinction between rational faith (*ākāraṇavati saddhā*) and baseless faith (*amūlīkā saddhā*) leading to a "reductionist account in terms of propositional belief. According to him, Jayatilleke is searching for a basic, general meaning of *saddhā* as cognitive. However, what Jayatilleke has attempted to show is that for Buddhism *saddhā* is significant only as a starting point in the progression of the disciple. *Saddhā* alone is not sufficient. It has to be finally replaced by, or culminate in, personal knowledge. A close examination of the canonical literature shows that Jayatilleke was justified in highlighting the fact that early Buddhism disapproved of *saddhā* on a purely emotive basis, without an attempt to balance one's emotion with inquiry and under-

standing. Jayatilleke's conclusions are based on a thorough examination of the early Buddhist attitude towards *saddhā* expressed in suttas such as *Canki-sutta*<sup>7</sup> and *Vimamsakasutta*<sup>8</sup>.

Hoffman hopes to refute Jayatilleke's position on the flimsiest of evidence, quoting out of context a line from *Majjhimanikāya* translated as "If faith is born, then he approaches". There is nothing in the passage quoted to suggest that the faith referred to here is not consequent to some initial inquiry. Even if Jayatilleke is open to the objection that he sought to explain all instances of Buddhist *saddhā* on a cognitive footing, this does not support the point that Hoffman wants to establish. For, it is undeniable that early Buddhism does not expect to base truth claims on the subjective conviction associated with *saddhā*. The *Canki-sutta* expresses quite explicitly the Buddhist position that the strength of one's faith or confidence (*saddhā*) is no guarantee that what is thought to be true is in fact true. For, according to this sutta, what one holds very firmly on the basis of faith may turn out to be false and empty (*susaddāṇitam yeva hoti, tan ca hoti rittam tuccham mūsa*). Perhaps it is Hoffman's over-enthusiasm to conveniently classify early Buddhism with religious belief, which according to his interpretation needs no empirical confirmation, that has prompted him to overlook the implications of such canonical suttas. Hoffman himself appears to suffer from what Wittgenstein calls "craving for generality", although he accuses Jayatilleke of this.

Even if Hoffman's point that the early Buddhist concept of faith cannot be reduced to a single cognitive use is admitted, it is not clear how this is related to what he wants to prove. For, he cannot deny that early Buddhism does not approve of faith (*saddhā*) as an end in itself. According to early Buddhism, when one says: "I have faith in P" it does not imply that P is true, whereas when one says: "I know P" it implies that P is true, provided one is making a valid knowledge claim. Faith is not considered to be equivalent to knowledge. Therefore,

7. *Majjhimanikāya* (PTS, London) vol. 2, p. 164.

8. *ibid.* vol. 1. p. 317.

Buddhism insists that there must be a point at which one can assert without dependence on faith, (*aññātrava saddhaya*) "I know this, I see this" (*aham etam jānāmi, aham etam passāmi*). Jayatilleke has amply drawn attention to these aspects of the Buddhist attitude towards *saddhā*, although Hoffman has not cared to take Jayatilleke's exhaustive analysis of the early Buddhist scriptures into account. Jayatilleke's position that the kind of faith valued in Buddhism is only that which is based on inquiry and understanding and that ultimately even that faith is insufficient, and has to be replaced by personal knowledge, is justified by the early canonical texts.

In the discussion of the Buddhist concept of *abhinna* Hoffman argues against the interpretation that *abhinna* stands for any significant cognitive experience through which facts about reality can be known or verified. Hoffman commits a serious error in his interpretation of the Pali term *sacchikaranīyo*, by distorting the etymological meaning of the term to suit his own preconceptions. Hoffman erroneously breaks up the Pali term *sacchikatvā* into *sacca+katvā* saying *sacca* means 'true' or 'correct', and *katvā* means 'made' or 'established'. The actual etymological derivation of *sacchi* is from *sa* meaning 'one's own' and *akṣi* meaning 'eye'. The term *sacchikatvā* means having seen or witnessed with one's own eyes, and it is used in Pali to indicate verification of a fact in the light of one's own personal experience. In this instance too, as in Chapter 2, Hoffman reverts to his irrelevant distinction between utterance and proposition. It is a strange thesis indeed that early Buddhism only made utterances, but did not state any facts or mean anything by those utterances in the propositional sense. Can one persist in holding such a position seriously?

In Chapter 5 Hoffman seems satisfied that he has "examined and rejected" the view that *abhinna* can be interpreted as the epistemological basis of early Buddhism on both internal textual and external philosophical grounds. However, his arguments are not convincing at all. The textual evidence is unmistakably in favour of saying that some of the *abhinna* experiences are claimed to be cognitive experiences. *Dibbasota* and *dibbacakkhu*, for instance, are claimed to be para-normal faculties by which

one can have access to the same visual and auditory data which are common to ordinary human audition and vision as well. Everything in the Buddhist texts suggests that they have to be taken that way, and not according to the far-fetched analogies which Hoffman suggests between the "Damascus road experience" and the "Nerañjara river experience".<sup>9</sup>

It is to be noted that the content of the knowledge claimed through *abhinnā* experience does not go beyond the spheres of the six senses admitted in Buddhism. With the exception of *iddhividhā*, which is described as a super-normal ability to perform certain acts, the content of the other *abhinnā* fall within the sphere of the data of the ordinary senses. *Dibbacakkhu* is claimed to give visual data, *dibbasota* auditory data, *pubbenivāsanussati* memory experiences, *cetopariya* access into the thought processes of others, and *asavakkhaya* awareness of the cankerless condition of one's own mind. The implication is that the difference between *abhinnā* and ordinary perceptual experience consists, not in the content of what is known, but in the way things are known.

One may, of course, contend that there is no evidence that human beings do, spontaneously or by a special mode of training, exercise such faculties of knowing. But this is an empirical question which has a bearing on the acceptability of the early Buddhist claim that it is possible to cultivate such a mode of knowing. To deny that early Buddhist texts make that claim is to misrepresent the early Buddhist position.

Hoffman expresses his disagreement with the view that early Buddhism can be described from an epistemological point of view as an empiricism. There is good reason, as we have already pointed out, to agree with Hoffman regarding this point. Classical Western empiricism involves an epistemological thesis regarding the origin of our ideas which are supposed to supply the raw material of human knowledge. Unlike the empiricists and rationalists of the Western philosophical tradition, Buddhism recognizes that there could be different levels and varieties of cognitive activity, fulfilling various human needs and

purposes. Empiricism, as much as rationalism, attempts to subsume all human knowledge under a single paradigm. While admitting with Hoffman that it is a mistake to look upon early Buddhism as consisting of a set of propositions which are on the same level as those found in the empirical sciences, it should be pointed out that human knowledge need not be confined to the sphere of the empirical sciences.

Although the establishment of truths in Buddhism cannot be said to be based on the strict procedural rules of empirical science, it is erroneous to argue, as Hoffman does, that there is no propositional knowledge contained in Buddhism which could conceivably stand the test of scientific inquiry. It is possible to argue that early Buddhism contains numerous assertions which are intended to be factual assertions. It is true that in many instances the factual element is concealed in the mytho-poetic form in which it is presented, but this is not always the case. There are enough instances in which psychological assertions are made in a straightforward way without bringing in any poetical or mythical embellishment. It is relevant here to draw attention to the early Buddhist description of the four *jhanas* or states of meditative rapture. These, however, are not peculiar to the Buddhist tradition, for they were the common heritage of Indian spiritual disciplines, which accepted the efficacy of *yoga* as a method of mind culture. The distinctive feature of Buddhism is that it described these *jhana* states purely in psychological terms without bringing in mystical or supernatural explanations for them. The *jhanas* for instance are described as follows\*

"Having got rid of sensuous desires and unskilled states of mind he attains and abides in the first rapture, consisting of the joy and happiness born of solitude and associated with initial and sustained thought.

Having calmed down initial and sustained thought, he attains and abides in the second rapture, consisting of the joy and happiness born of mental composure resulting from one-pointedness of mind, free from initial and sustained thought, leading to the purity of the inner self."<sup>10</sup>

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10. *Dīghanikāya* (PTS. London) vol. 1. p. 73-74.



The above descriptions refer mainly to psychological states, thought activity, feelings and emotions, which are said to be effectively transformed by the mental discipline undertaken by the trainee.

Early Buddhism makes an explicit claim to verifiability with regard to the gradual stages of psychological transformation effected by following a specific method of mental training. This process of psychological transformation is said to reach its culmination in the attainment of the *abhinna* described as *asavakkhayañāna*, (the knowledge of the destruction of intoxicants). It is equivalent to the knowledge of *niṅbāna* as defined in Buddhism. Early Buddhism admits that a person can cultivate his awareness through the training of mindfulness to observe introspectively the dispositions of his own mind. Accordingly, when the mind is completely free from the dispositions described as *lobha* (lust), *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (delusion), it is possible to observe this introspectively. However, Buddhism does not leave it entirely to the conviction of the person who makes such an introspective claim. For, according to the *Vimamsakasutta*, such a claim is open to rigorous testing by an external observer, to whom only ordinary sense perception is available to carry out such testing.

In the *Vimamsakasutta* the Buddha invites anyone who wishes to test his own claim to be an enlightened person, a person who is no longer affected by *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, to apply a procedure of rigorous behavioural tests, observing his bodily behaviour with one's eyes and his verbal behaviour with one's ears to determine whether he satisfies the criteria for being called a man free from lust, hatred and delusion. This suggests that there is no need to mystify even the highest goal of early Buddhism, described as *samboḁhi* or *niṅbāna*, as a metaphysical Being transcending empirical observation.

Early Buddhism claims to adopt a course of behavioural and psychological training (*sikkha*), involving voluntary restraint and redirection of bodily, verbal and mental behaviour, which is believed to lead to the effective transformation of the dispositional traits of man. If such transformation does actually occur, it should be describable,

and such descriptions could very well be descriptions of psychological fact. There is no *a priori* reason to exclude such descriptions from the sphere of the factual. It has also been revealed to some extent in recent investigations that there are even observable physical correlates of the psychological transformation effected through meditative training of the mind. Is it reasonable to say that all claims related to such matters belong to a peculiar category called religious claims which are neither true nor false?

Hoffman's interpretations of Buddhist doctrines have been largely determined by recent philosophical inquiries into what philosophers call the problems concerning religious language. In the present century the philosophical method followed by the most influential school of philosophy in the Western world, which came to be known as linguistic analysis, considered inquiry into the variety of ways in which language is and can be used in numerous areas of discourse as the key to the solution of philosophical puzzles and the attainment of philosophical clarity. This method of philosophical inquiry, popularized largely through the influence of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, has been considered by neo-Wittgensteinian philosophers to be applicable in the area of religious discourse as well. The result of the application of this method in the inquiry into the logic of religious discourse is the theory that distinctively religious utterances are not instances of the cognitive use of language.

Hoffman appears to suggest that the fundamental teachings of early Buddhism belong to what can be described as the use of distinctively religious language. By this Hoffman overlooks numerous teachings of Buddhism, which have a psychological and/or sociological significance. A great many of the statements made in early Buddhism in its applications of the causal method of explanation can plainly be seen to be of the type that may or may not be confirmed by observable evidence. Early Buddhism, for instance, presents a theory which explains the nature of social conflict, tracing social conflict partly to psychological responses such as attachment and repulsion, envy and selfishness. It is not without reason that some researchers, who have an interest in psychology, believe

that there is something of interest to the psychologist to be found in the teachings of Buddhism. Hoffman's interpretation of Buddhism proposes to exclude such approaches to the study of Buddhism by pinning it down to an artificially or externally imposed label called religious language on the body of the Buddhist teachings.

Early Buddhism can be observed to have adopted a variety of methods of discourse in the scriptural exposition of its doctrines. There are instances in which it made use of myths, legends, stories and anecdotes in order to expound a moral principle or what it considered to be a fact about reality. There is no doubt that it did not exclusively adhere to a method of discourse which in contemporary terminology can be called descriptive or scientific. But the conclusion that it contains no more than an emotive or non-cognitive use of language or a language of moral commitment, or an autonomous language game consisting of its own internal criteria determining what is properly to be said is utterly unacceptable. Hoffman does not pay attention to the wide variety of "language games" which early Buddhism appears to have played.

The non-cognitivist analysis of religious language has been proposed primarily with reference to theistic religion and especially in relation to the Judaic-Christian faith. Even in this area of its application questions can be raised about its reasonableness. As John Hick argues, we cannot doubt that utterances about God within the Judaic-Christian faith have always been meant by those who made them operate as cognitive discourse.<sup>11</sup> Even the present-day believer in theistic religion has the conviction that he is not merely engaged in a particular form of life within which talk about God makes sense, but that he is making serious claims about reality. It is one thing to say that religious language does in fact have a non-cognitive logical structure and another to recommend that it should have such a structure. As Hick quite rightly points out: "...the non-cognitivist is not offering an objective analysis of the language of faith as living speech, but is instead recommending a quite new use of it. For the non-cognitivist theories are not descriptive but radically revisionary. They are not accounts of the mean-

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11. *God and the Universe of Faiths* (Macmillan 1973) p.8.

ing of religious language as the speech of actual religious communities, but proposals about the meaning that it ought to be given in the future".

What Hick says about theistic Christianity applies with greater force to non-theistic early Buddhism. There is no justification whatsoever for applying the non-cognitivist analysis to understand or explain the fundamental tenets of early Buddhism. With regard to doctrines such as rebirth and *karma*, the principle of dependent co-origination, the problem of *dukkha*, the efficacy and experiential validity of the path and the ultimate goal of freedom from cankers or *nibbana*, the non-cognitivist has no grounds to maintain that the Buddha or the disciples of the Buddha intended these to be doctrines which have a role only within the confines of the religious form of life that they were prepared to accept. Instead the Buddha and his disciples seriously believed that these were facts about the world. The moral commitments are thought to be derived from these beliefs, but not the other way round, as the non-cognitivist suggests.

Hoffman's thesis that distinctively religious utterances are irrefutable leads to the consequence that all religious claims are fictional. Religions can and do make claims which may be empirically true or false. Suppose that there is a religion R, which agrees in all respects with Hoffman's definition of religion, and it contains as quite central to its system of religious belief that the world will come to an end 10 years hence. Is such a belief to be conceived as irrefutable? Those who genuinely subscribe to a religious ideology do so because they sincerely expect that experiential confirmation of the world view presented in the religion will sooner or later be forthcoming. No reasonable man will persist in holding beliefs about the nature of himself and the world which he knows to be obviously incoherent with human experience.

The presupposition involved in the non-cognitivist stand is the conviction that the paradigm of all genuine cognitive activity is exclusively associated with empirical science. In saying that there cannot be truth or falsity in the Buddhist or Christian teachings he is committing himself to the scientific approach to what could conceiva-

bly be true or false. He is not willing to grant that early Buddhism, Christianity, and science could conceivably be competitors in the field of human knowledge. His conviction is that only what strictly and rigorously follows the methods of science can have a claim to genuine knowledge about matters of fact. This line of thinking, which was initially promoted with great zeal by the philosophers of the Logical Positivist school, expressed mere contempt for what they considered to fall outside science. For them religion was nonsense. The neo-Wittgensteinians, however, attempt to salvage religion by saying that religious statements have meaning. They attempt to make religious statements meaningful only by making them non-competitors in the field of truth. This is not a consequence that most people genuinely committed to a religious belief are likely to accept.

Hoffman examines in the last chapter the sense in which *amata* (immortality) applies to the ultimate attainment of Buddhism. He concludes that there is in early Buddhism a notion of eternal life, although that notion is different from the notion of an endless life. He believes that there is good reason on textual grounds to maintain a distinction between *nibbana* and *parinibbana*. Although one may doubt the validity of such a distinction as far as the use of the term *parinibbana* in the early canonical suttas is concerned, one can agree with Hoffman that Buddhism makes a distinction between *nibbana* before the dissolution of the aggregates and *nibbana* after the dissolution of the aggregates. Hoffman rejects the 'transcendentalist' interpretation of *nibbana* after the dissolution of the aggregates, while maintaining that there is a sense in which, even before the dissolution of the aggregates *nibbana* is describable as eternal life.

Hoffman shows concern here for interpreting Buddhism in terms of what it could conceivably maintain in terms of life, whereas the Buddhist use of *amata* draws attention primarily to the overcoming of death. On a careful interpretation of the early Buddhist scriptures, it is highly improbable that there is room to interpret the Buddhist notion of *amata* other than as the conquest of repeated death, by eliminating the conditions that bring about repeated becoming (*punabbhava*). Hoffman's use of the expression "eternal life" as an explanation of the term

*amata* seems inappropriate in the context of Buddhism, although the sense which he gives to "eternal life" is unobjectionable.

Hoffman insists that the main objective of his study is better understanding of early Buddhism. Going through the work one may seriously doubt whether he has achieved this. The thesis that early Buddhism is exclusively a religion, coupled with the non-cognitivist thesis regarding the nature and function of religious language, that religious utterances are irrefutable, gives rise to misunderstanding not only of Buddhism but also of religion in general. Hoffman does not pay attention at all to what is philosophically or psychologically significant in early Buddhism. 'Religion' is a term alien to the Buddhist tradition, as much as 'philosophy' and 'science' are. But the complex variety of subject-matter contained in the early Buddhist teachings is capable of kindling the interest of those engaged in any of the activities designated by those terms. Hoffman, however, is content with his generalization that Buddhism is religious discourse, and attempts to impose a narrow contemporary perspective upon it.

P.D. PREMASIRI

VEDANĀNUPASSANĀ: ON THE MANAGEMENT  
OF KAMMA\*

The Āṅguttaranikāya<sup>1</sup> defines kamma as intention (cetanāham bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi), as it is intention that is translated into action through body, speech and mind (cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā). Saṅkappa is another word for intention, and it is noteworthy that intentions and thoughts are said to converge in sensations/feelings saṅkappavitakkā vedanāsamosaṇā<sup>2</sup>. The commentary explains: Saṅkappavitakkā ti saṅkappabhūta vitakkā, that is, saṅkappavitakkā means thoughts which have become intentions. In fact all mental phenomena are said to get translated into sensations: sabbe dhammā vedanāsamosaṇā<sup>4</sup>). The commentary explains sabbe dhammā as pañcakkhandhā, the five<sup>5</sup> aggregates, namely the psycho-physical unit that forms man. Then it comes to mean that the five aggregates converge in sensations. The entire human personality is alive with sensations; without them man would be a mere vegetable. Hence the vital importance of sensations for understanding the nature of human life.

\* All references to Pali texts in this article are to the Pali Text Society, London, editions thereof, and are abbreviated as follows:

<u>A</u>	-	<u>Āṅguttaranikāya</u>
<u>AA</u>	-	<u>Āṅguttaranikāya Atthakathā</u>
<u>M</u>	-	<u>Majjhimanikāya</u>
<u>S</u>	-	<u>Samyuttanikāya</u>
<u>Sn</u>	-	<u>Suttanipāta</u>
<u>Sn A</u>	-	<u>Suttanipāta Atthakathā</u>

<sup>1</sup> A. iv. 415.

<sup>2</sup> A. iv. 385.

<sup>3</sup> AA. iv. 175.

<sup>4</sup> A. iv. 339.

<sup>5</sup> AA. iv. 158.

According to the Nidānasamyutta the entire body is a physical manifestation of ancient kamma.<sup>6</sup> It says: The body is neither yours nor anybody else's; it is the appearance of former kamma, compounded, willed and made sensitive (nāyam kāyo tumhākaṃ na pi aññesaṃ, purāṇaṃ idaṃ kammaṃ, abhisankhataṃ abhisancetayitaṃ vedaniyaṃ datthabbaṃ). The Salāyatanasamyutta maintains that the sense faculties are fabricated by ancient kamma (cakkhum purāṇakammaṃ abhisankhataṃ abhisancetayitaṃ vedaniyaṃ datthabbaṃ etc.). We get a body with its particular strengths, weaknesses and predispositions because it is so fabricated by our past kammic energies, which gave it conception. Similarly the sensitivity and the potentialities of our sense faculties are determined by our previous kamma. It appears that we receive a genetic heritage which is consonant with our kammic heritage. It is repeatedly said in the canon that beings own their kamma, they are heirs to their kamma, kamma is their matrix, kamma is their relation, kamma is their refuge, kamma divides beings into high and low (kamassakā sattā kammaḍāyāda kammayonī kammabandhū kammapatisaraṇā kammaṃ satte vibhajati yad idaṃ hinappanitatāyāti). Kamma seems to choose, out of millions of possibilities, a particular genetic pattern through which it could best express its energies. Therefore it is possible to conclude that kammic energy is transformed into sentient matter which gives rise to appropriate sensations.

Just as there are ancient (purāṇa) kamma, there are new (nava) kamma as well.<sup>10</sup> The new kammās are the intentional physical, verbal and mental actions that we perform at

<sup>6</sup> S. ii. 65.

<sup>7</sup> loc.cit.

<sup>8</sup> S. iv. 132.

<sup>9</sup> For example M. iii. 203; A. iii. 72 = 186 = v. 88.

<sup>10</sup> S. loc.cit.



present, here and now. It is important to note the saying that kamma does not get destroyed na hi nassati kassaci kammaṃ.<sup>11</sup> This is because kamma builds up sentient matter continuously. The process of building sentient matter, started at conception by ancient kamma, is kept up by new kamma. This, in other words, is the conversion of mental energy into physical sentient matter.

kamma gets expiated by giving rise to vipāka: so ... na tāva kālaṃ karoti yāva na taṃ pāpakammaṃ vyanti hoti.<sup>12</sup> Vipāka is but the experience of appropriate pleasant or painful sensations (so tattha dukkhā tippā kaṭukā vedanā vedeti etc). There are different types of kamma, which have to be experienced in different spheres.<sup>13</sup> There are kamas which have to be experienced in a state of woe (nirayavedaniyaṃ), in the animal kingdom (tiracchāna-yonivedaniyaṃ)<sup>14</sup> in the peta world (pittivisayavedaniyaṃ), in the human world (manussalokavedaniyaṃ), and in the celestial world (devalokavedaniyaṃ). But if in the process of experiencing vipāka, i.e. resultant pleasant or painful sensations, one reacts with greed, hatred or delusion, one produces more and more kamma, which gets transformed into sentient matter, which in turn generates more and more resultant sensations. Thus a vicious circle is established. This is the cyclic process of samsāra.

If one wishes to break through this cyclic process, one has to bring about the destruction of kamma (kammakkhaya). This can be done by destroying greed, hatred and delusion, as they are said to be the origins of kamma (lobho/doso/moho kammanidānasambhavo). Lobhakkhayā/dosakkhayā/mohokkhayā kamma-

<sup>11</sup> Sn. 666.

<sup>12</sup> A. i. 141; see also M. iii. 183.

<sup>13</sup> A. iii. 415.

nidānasaṅkhayo).<sup>14</sup> According to the Kukkuravatikasutta there are kamas which are neither black nor white, and which produce results which are neither black nor white.<sup>15</sup> Such kamma is said to be conducive to the elimination of kamma (atthi kammaṃ akanhaṃ asukkaṃ akanha-m-asukkavipākaṃ kammaṃ kammakkhayāya samvattati). These are the kamas which are neither evil nor meritorious. This type of kamma is explained as the intention (cetanā) one has to eliminate evil, meritorious and mixed kamma, which give respective results.

Now, the question that arises is how this intention can be translated into effective action. According to the Aṅguttaranikāya<sup>16</sup> one should observe moral habits (silavā hoti patimokkha samvarasamvuto...); not accumulate new kamma and expel old kamma by experiencing them. This is annihilation of kamma here and now, immediately verifiable and leading to higher spirituality; this has to be individually realised by the wise (navāṃ ca kammaṃ na karoti purāṇāṃ ca kammaṃ phussa phussa vyantikaroti sanditthikā nijjarā akālikā ehipassikā opanāyikā paccattaṃ veditabbā viññūhi). The most important phrase here which has need to be clarified is phussa phussa vyantikaroti, i.e. "one destroys (old kamma) by experiencing (them)."

The process of destroying kamma is explained more lucidly in the following verses of the Dvayatānupassanāsutta:<sup>17</sup>

Sukhaṃ vā yadi vā dukkhaṃ adukkha-m-asukhaṃ sahā  
ajjhattaṃ ca bahiddhā ca yaṃ kiñci atthi veditaṃ  
Etaṃ dukkhaṃ ti ñatvāna mosaddhaṃ palokinaṃ  
phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ evaṃ tattha virajjati  
vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto ti.

<sup>14</sup> A. v. 262.

<sup>15</sup> M. 1. 391 and A. 11. 232

<sup>16</sup> 1. 221.

<sup>17</sup> Sn. 738-739.

(Whatever sensations one has, pleasant, painful or neutral, internal or external, one should know all that to be full of suffering, deceitful and disintegrating. Continuously experience them, seeing them passing away. Thus one gets detached with reference to them. With the destruction of sensations a monk becomes hungerless (greedless) and attains the peace of nibbāna.)

The commentary on this verse<sup>18</sup> sheds much light on the practical aspect of the exercise when it says: phussa phussāti udayavyayañānaena phusitvā, i.e. "phussa phussa means repeatedly experiencing with the knowledge of the arising and passing away (of sensations)"; Vayaṃ passaṃ ti ante bhaṅgaṃ eva passanto, i.e. "vayaṃ passaṃ means seeing the disintegration at the end;" and Vedanānaṃ khayā ti tato paraṃ maggañānaena kammaṣaṃpayuttānaṃ vedanānaṃ khayā, i.e. "Vedanānaṃ khayā means by the destruction of sensations which are connected with kamma, with the help of path-knowledge thereafter."

When we consider the practical aspect of phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ we cannot help but notice that the phrase refers to vedanānupassanā. According to the Satipaṭṭhānasutta<sup>19</sup> one has to be aware of the various sensations as they arise in the body. One has to observe the arising of the sensations (samudayadhammānupassī), and their passing away (vayadhammānupassī). This is what is called being aware of sensations without reacting to them.

Generally we revel in pleasant sensations as lust underlies pleasant sensations (sukhāya vedanāya rāgānusayo anuseti).<sup>20</sup> We revolt against painful sensations as aversion underlies unpleasant sensations (dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo anuseti).<sup>21</sup> We are unaware of neutral

<sup>18</sup> In Sn.A. 416.

<sup>19</sup> M. 1. 59.

<sup>20</sup> M. 1. 303.

<sup>21</sup> M. loc.cit.

sensations as ignorance underlies neutral sensations (adukkha-m-asukhāya vedanāya aviññānusayo anuseti).<sup>22</sup>

Thus our normal habit is to react to the various sensations with greed, hatred and delusion. When we so react kamma is built up, as discussed above. But if with vedanānupassanā we observe the arising and passing away of sensations without reacting to them, then old kamma is destroyed, and new kamma does not accumulate.

We saw above that kamma is translated into sentient matter, which in turn gives rise to appropriate sensations. This is bhavacakka at work, the wheel of becoming. Vedanānupassanā is the reverse process, the Dhammacakka set in motion within the framework of the individual. When one sees sensations with mindfulness (sati) as they come up, they get destroyed without giving rise to kamma. This is what is meant by phussa phussa vyatikaroti. This is how mindfulness acts as a psychological laser beam, as it were, to destroy kamma which do not otherwise get destroyed without giving rise to vipāka; for, it is said that kamma does not get destroyed na hi nassati kassaci kammaṃ).<sup>23</sup> This is the art of experiencing sensations without being attached (so sukham/dukkham/adukkha-m-asukham ce vedanam vediyati visānutto nam vediyati).<sup>24</sup> A monk who destroys sensations thus attains the peace of nibbāna (vedanānam khayā bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto).<sup>25</sup>

It has to be emphasised that vedanānam khayā does not mean the destruction of all sensations. According to the Vedanāsamyyutta<sup>26</sup> there are eight types of sensations. Four types are due to disturbances caused by bodily humours such as bile (pitta), phlegm (senha), wind (vāta) and a combination of

22 M. loc.cit.

23 Sn. 666.

24 S. iv. 209.

25 Sn. 739.

26 S. iv. 230.

them (ṣannipātika). The fifth type is caused by climatic changes (utuparināmaja). The sixth type is caused by using disagreeable things together (visamapariharaja), such as combinations of foods which may prove to be poisonous. The seventh type is caused by injuries and attacks from outside (opakkamika). The eighth type is generated by kamma as retribution (kammavipākajāni vedayitāni). Of these eight types it is only the last named that is destroyed by vedanānupassanā. The other seven types of sensations continue to function.

It does not seem to be required that all kamma should be eradicated completely for the attainment of arahantship. That there may remain a certain fraction of kamma can be assumed from the canonical episode of Āṅgulimāla.<sup>27</sup> Āṅgulimāla, who committed many a murder, during that same lifetime is said to have suffered being accidentally hit by stones and sticks, though they were not aimed at him, even after he became an arahant. Sometimes he used to come from his alms-round with head-injuries and torn robes. The Buddha admonished him to bear with these sufferings as this is the present experience of evil done, for which he may have had to suffer long in a state of woe, had he not attained arahantship.

It may be presumed that when kammic energy is sufficiently destroyed with vedanānupassanā so that it cannot give rise to another birth, the knowledge must be arising that there is no more birth (...ayaṃ antimā jāti, natthi, 'dāni punabbhavo ti;<sup>28</sup> Khīṇā jāti ... nāparaṃ itthattāyāti).<sup>29</sup> This is the most important assurance of the liberative experience. There is no reference to kammakkhaya in any of the formulae expressing arahantship. But it is noteworthy that even elsewhere there is very little reference to kammakkhaya,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> M. i. 104.

<sup>28</sup> M. i. 167.

<sup>29</sup> M. i. 23; also i. 38.

<sup>30</sup> See for example A. ii. 232 and M. i. 391.

whereas rāgakkhaya/lobhakkhaya, dosakkhaya and mohakkhaya find frequent mention in the texts. The few instances where kammakkhaya does occur it mostly describes the doctrine of Nigantha Nātaputta, who attempted to make an end of suffering (dukkhakkhaya)<sup>31</sup> through the destruction of kamma (kammakkhaya). But kamma cannot be recognised or verified, therefore the Buddha asks Jaina disciples whether they know that they have done evil kamma in the past, and whether they know that so much suffering has been eliminated by their practice of penance and so much suffering has yet to be eliminated. They know none of these. Therefore the Buddha admonishes his disciples to eliminate, not kamma, but evil mental states such as greed, hatred and delusion, which are observable and verifiable, as they give rise to kamma.

One very effective method of doing so is the exercise of vedanānupassanā. When this exercise is practised for some time, the disciple himself begins to notice that his negative mental states are on the wane. This has a debilitating effect on kamma, and it can be concluded that vedanānupassanā is an extremely effective method of bringing about the destruction of kamma.

As there is a close relationship between kamma and saṅkhāra, the latter being used as a more precise technical term having psychological connotations, the living vipassanā tradition maintains that deep-seated saṅkhāras come to the surface and are eliminated when one continues to practise vedanānupassanā. The Dvayatānupassanā sutta<sup>32</sup> expresses the same idea when it says saṅkhārānaṃ nirodhena natthi dukkhassa sambhavo, i.e. "With the cessation of volitional activities there is no arising of suffering".

LILY DE SILVA

<sup>31</sup> M. 1. 93.

<sup>32</sup> Sn. 731.

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# TOWARD A THEORY OF RITUAL AND VIOLENCE: THE RECENT SINHALA EXPERIENCE

John Clifford Holt

During the past several years, as violence in Sri Lanka has exacerbated and become an almost normative mode of political expression, several studies analyzing the confluences between religious myth and ritual on the one hand and socio-political behaviour on the other have been advanced in an effort to understand the causes of this unfolding tragedy. In this brief paper, I want to contribute to the discussion of the relationship between ritual and violence *per se* by determining the relevance of the principal ideas set forth in Rene Girard's well-known and highly influential essay, *Violence and Sacred*.<sup>1</sup> The basic principles of Girard's seminal theoretical constructs will be considered within the context of the Sinhala experience of violence and ritual occurring during the period from July, 1989 through March 1990.<sup>2</sup>

The theoretical assumptions governing previous studies of the relationship between religious expression and political behaviour in Sri Lanka belie two different philosophical orientations. In the first type, attempts have been made to determine the manner in which religious ontology, articulated through myth, symbol and ritual, has made a formative impact upon the structures, dynamics and substance of traditional political behaviour and political institutions in Sri Lanka. A primary example of this type of approach is found in the collection of historically-oriented essays edited by Bardwell Smith entitled *Religion and the Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka*.<sup>3</sup> In most of the essays of this carefully crafted volume, the manner in which myth and symbol "make history", or have become paradigmatic or causative for political behaviour and ethno-political identity in various periods of Sinhala history has been explored in considerable detail. Another yet more graphic example of this first type of theoretical approach, which holds traditional unconscious or "semiconscious" cognitive structures

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. from the French by Patrick Gregory Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press (1977); originally published in Paris as *Le Violence et le sacre* by Editions Bernard Grasset (1972).

<sup>2</sup> My account of the events during this period is based almost exclusively upon personal observation.

<sup>3</sup> Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books (1978).

responsible for the fruition of specific types of political behaviour, e.g. violence, is the provocative analysis advanced by Bruce Kapferer in his *Legends of People, Myths of State*.<sup>4</sup> In this tract, Kapferer argues that a deep-seated social psychology of exorcism, evident in the mythic expressions of the fifth century A.D. monastic chronicle *Mahavamsa*, is ultimately responsible for the violent manner in which Sinhala Buddhists behaved in "exorcising the Tamil demon" from their midst during the tumultuous breakdown of civil order and human rights in July, 1983.

The second type of study focusing on the relationship between cognitive modes of religion and expression and political behaviour in Sri Lanka stresses the ways in which social and economic changes in society have fostered transformations in religious formulations. The primary example of this approach is the recently published study by Gananath Obeyesekere and Richard Gombrich entitled *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*.<sup>5</sup> Here, deteriorating economic conditions caused by population explosion, especially in urban areas, are cited as the chief reasons for the appearance of new and sometimes bizarre forms of emergent religious belief and behaviour. Obeyesekere's earlier study of "Protestant Buddhism"<sup>6</sup> is also a very good example of this second type of approach. In contrast to the first approach, social, economic and political conditions are understood to make a concerted impact upon the substance and structures of religion rather than vice versa.

Rene Girard's universalistic approach is basically of the second type: religious ideas and sentiments, especially as they are articulated in ritual, are understood as unequivocally responsive to acts of violence. Specifically, all forms of ritual sacrifice are regarded by Girard as precise distillations of violence, functioning as surrogate means for displacing violent aggressive drives. I will try to show, however, that Girard and others of both approaches, have managed to consider only half of the equation in determining the dynamic relationship that exists between religious thought and ritual on the one hand and social and political behaviour on the other. That is, I want to argue that forms of religious thought and cultic expression usually stand in a dynamic dialectical relationship to the reality of social and political behaviour in a traditional society. While this discussion will demonstrate the limitations of Girard's analysis of the relationship between ritual and violence, I also want to highlight how his specific discussion of the

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<sup>4</sup> Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution (1988)

<sup>5</sup> Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (1988).

<sup>6</sup> "Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon", *Modern Ceylon Studies* 1 (1970), reprinted in Bardwell Smith ed. *The Two Wheels of Dhamma* (Chambersburg), PA: AAR Monograph no. 3 (1972), pp. 58-78.



psychology of victimisation is especially relevant to understanding the consequences of violent events which transpired during the final months of 1989. Finally, in following the work of Geertz and Ricouer<sup>7</sup>, I want to assert that ritual activity and symbolic cult are especially genuine indices, almost barometers, of the manner in which a community copes with the psychologically deleterious impact of violence.

## II

Kandy's annual Asala perahara is an almost textbook example of how public symbolic ritual processions can express the dynamics and structures of social and religious hierarchy in a traditional society. Sri Lankan scholars explaining the symbolic significance of the perahara have noted that this pageant simultaneously articulates: 1) public reaffirmation of the supremacy of the Buddha and the relative hierarchical importance of deities in the religious lives of the people; and 2) a magical ritual prescription for social order and material prosperity during the ensuing annual cycle.<sup>8</sup> H.L. Seneviratne, in particular, remarks that this rite, more than any other, symbolizes fundamental socio-cosmic structures and the collective material well-being of Kandyan society.<sup>9</sup> Thus, as I have intimated, observing the perahara proceedings can be somewhat analogous to reading a barometer of Sinhala Sri Lanka's contemporary socio-religious and politico-economic health.

In August of 1989, many will recall that the perahara was almost not held at all due to concerns about the prevailing political and security climate of the hill country. From March through May, a periodic series of hartal (strikes) had been orchestrated successfully by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) which, in turn, had been

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<sup>7</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 90-117 and *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books (1973) pp. 126-141; Paul Ricouer, "The Symbol gives rise to Thought," in *The Symbolism of Evil*. trans. from the French by Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row (1967)).

<sup>8</sup> In the former times of Kandyan kingship, the circumambulation of Kandy town by the royally sponsored procession symbolized the "righteous capture" or ritual ordering of society on the one hand, and the magical hope of producing rain - torches and whips symbolizing lightning and pounding of drums thunder - insuring prosperity on the other.

<sup>9</sup> For detailed analysis of the rite's symbolism, see H.L. Seneviratne, *Rituals of the Kandyan State* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (1978), pp. 89-114.

accompanied by acts of violence against those who failed to observe them. Systematically executed murders of public workers and officials which, in turn, had the effect of eliciting brutal government reprisals against suspected JVP members and/or their sympathizers, had created what was then popularly referred to as a public "fear psychosis."<sup>10</sup> When JVP-inspired hartals were announced by the appearance of posters at key intersections in Kandy town, it was not uncommon for people to refer to them sarcastically as "orders from the unofficial government". During this same time period, the university system was shut down completely due to a strike by "minor staff" demanding compensation (Rs.2,5000 per month) in parity with Janasaviya (the government's new poverty alleviation program) recipients. The university strike was followed in June and July by a total strike against the Sri Lanka Transit Board by workers (widely thought to be supported by JVP sympathizers) who made similar demands. The latter strike, accompanied by periodic shut-downs of water and electricity in the hill country, brought commerce in the area to an almost complete standstill. Within days following the settling of the transportation strike, the JVP announced plans for public demonstrations to be held on the two year anniversary of the Indo-Lanka accord - the agreement between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lanka's President J.R. Jayewardene that had brought as many as 70,000 Indian Army troops to the island's newly emerged North and East Provinces, an action that had resulted in the unintended consequence of galvanized strength and support for the JVP's declared intention of toppling the UNP government. In June and July, rumours filtered throughout the hill country that the JVP imminently intended to declare a provisional government with Kandy as its capital. It was within this unsettled context that a decision was made by the Diyawadana Nilame (the lay official in charge of the ritual proceedings at the Dalada Maligawa) to proceed with the perahara festivities in limited fashion. It was decided to reduce the procession to only three nights of observance and to drastically scale down the normally climactic final day observance.

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<sup>10</sup> While the term "fear psychosis" adequately conveys the deep anxieties that many people experienced during these days of great uncertainty, it is a bit of a misnomer, for "psychosis" implies irrational delusion. In fact, my sense is that the terrible fears experienced by many were entirely rational. That is, there were very good reasons for many to be fearful in the prevailing context of JVP and government activity. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the crisis was experienced as a paralysis, or a suspension of normal responses to life's circumstances. Caught in a vice-like grip between two violent and unpredictable forces, the common person had every reason to be paralysed. What I am arguing is that the kind of psychological paralysis experienced by many during the crisis months of 1989 is but an individuation of the social anomie that accounts for the absence of ritual.

It would probably be more accurate to say that the perahara limped rather than triumphantly processed through the streets of Kandy in 1989. In other years, larger crowds have attended village peraharas in outlying areas of the hill country. Not only were the Kandyan crowds paltry (security personnel decidedly outnumbering the few naive tourists and brave residents who attended the three night-time processions), but the ritual performances of pomp and dance were atypically and depressingly uninspired. During the final day perahara, the ritual procession had been planned so that only "temple square" would be circumambulated three times, a drastic curtailment of normal procedures. But after the first round, drummers, flag-bearers, dancers and even the whip-bearing dwarf began to drop out. At the conclusion of the second round by the procession's dwindling remnant, a decision was made to wrap the matter up immediately, thus bringing the perahara to a spasmodic, desultory end.

What is obvious from this account is that the scope and depth of social distress and disorder characterizing the social, economic and political dynamics of the contemporary Kandyan region were thoroughly reflected in the quality of ritual proceedings of the perahara. If the perahara traditionally and normatively symbolizes order and prosperity, then its atrophic and lacklustre performance seemed to mirror perfectly the prevailing conditions of social anarchy, economic deprivation and fear. More than a few anxiously wondered about the country's (and culture's) future in light of such a spectacular ritual disconfirmation of the past.

In the three months that followed until November, there was an astounding *absence* of ritual in and around Kandy. At the same time, unprecedented degrees of violence swept throughout the upcountry region. a government counter-offensive consisting of "comb and search operations" against suspected JVP members and their sympathizers, usually conducted under the cover of night, began in late August and resulted in the disappearance of hundreds or perhaps even thousands of individuals. In this climate of fear and uncertainty, not only were the traditional peraharas in outlying areas cancelled, but village *devalayas* were closed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when normally *kapuralas* would be fielding the problems of everyday life and petitioning the gods on behalf of their clients. *Pirit* was nowhere to be heard at night, *danes* and *banas* were postponed indefinitely, and *kathina* offerings were cancelled for the season. In short, the traditional ritual cycle had been occluded, a fact that seemed to reflect in tandem the relative occlusion of normative social and religious values in society-at-large, values that these rites usually articulate.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The absence of ritual correlates with the seeming suspension of a normative world view, a breakdown in confidence in the traditional order of values and respect for human life. *Pirit* was not being chanted; for, there seemed to be little hope for peace and prosperity. It also seemed to make sense that in the current

There was, of course, one major exception to the absence of ritual during the months from July through mid-November of 1989. Funeral rites, when not performed with in sometimes incredibly sinister and sadistic ways, were performed with unprecedented frequency, serving as constant reminders of the spectre of death then menacing the conditions of life. Here, following Girard's theory, ritual not only remains responsive to violence, but in some cases yet another occasion for its expression.

On the night of November 18, 1989, Rohana Wijeweera, the revolutionary leader of the JVP movement, was arrested in a small village just off Gampola while posing as a middle-class planter. Amidst questionable circumstances, Wijeweera and his aide-in-command were killed within hours of capture. In reaction, public sentiment regarding Wijeweera's death was one of uncertainty (rumours expressing disbelief) and admiration (how could the erstwhile champion of the underprivileged have lived in such material conditions of comfort?). But as days and weeks passed, as it became apparent that Wijeweera had actually been killed, a pervasive sense of relief was almost palpable in public life, egged on in part by government officials, who seemed to gloat in victory was now inevitable. Government security forces continued their program of operations, but one side of the threat to the public was clearly diminishing.

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context, the ritual cycle at *devalayas* had been suspended; for, the absence of *kapuralas* chanting their *yaticas* to the gods seemed to reflect the loss of faith in traditional conceptions of order and reciprocity in Sinhala culture. What I am suggesting is that the absence of ritual, like the shut down of the entire educational system, clearly indicates that life is regarded as too tenuous a proposition for normal modes of public behaviour to continue. In turn, the suspension of ritual indicates the suspension of its normative function of world view maintenance. The suspension of ritual indicates the social experience of pure liminality or anomie.

What I am suggesting here is that funeral rites during this period not only continued to function as normative means for coping with the sting of death, but in many cases they were actually used by various parties to impart a political message in humiliating and grotesque fashion. In some instances, written messages were left on the bodies of mutilated victims, which not only stated the purported reasons for their deaths (as traitors), but also demanded that funeral obsequies be observed in a particularly "fitting" fashion to characterize the rationale for the murder itself. Moreover, it became clear that the increasing public display of mutilated victims had become a ritualized means for political expression to both sides of the conflict. Patterns of display soon became evident, making it possible to surmise which side had been responsible for the killings and who was to take note of it.

By mid-January, crowds began to appear once again in Kandy and Peradeniya in connection with pilgrimages being made to Sri Pada by ever-increasing numbers of villagers. Over the subsequent weeks, newspapers reported that the number of pilgrims journeying to venerate the footprint of the Buddha was the largest in memory. In early February, a ten day exhibition of the Dalada ("Tooth Relic") at the Maligawa in Kandy attracted unprecedented numbers of villagers from surrounding areas to "take darsan". During three days of the exhibition, the dense queues were so long that one extended over a mile down Trincomalee Street to Trinity College, while two others extended around opposite directions of the Lake (almost two miles) until they collided in front of the Hotel Suisse. Newspapers estimated that during the ten-day period of the exhibition, over one million people (by appearance almost exclusively villagers) had made the pilgrimage to Kandy.

### III

Rene Girard's theory of violence and its relation to public ritual is somewhat similar to Freud's<sup>13</sup> and Konrad Lorenz's<sup>14</sup>. In relation to the former, a collective murder stands at the historical origins of religion and culture; in relation to the latter, ritual is a surrogate displacement of violence (civilization's means for channelling aggression constructively). To understand how a collective murder could stand at the beginning of human culture, how an act of violence could possibly define both the problem and the solution for social formation, Girard suggests that humans have no innate "breaking mechanism" for intraspecific aggression. Once unleashed, interpersonal rivalries naturally will not stop short of manslaughter. Violence, according to Girard, is endemic to human beings. Since the only response to murder is yet another killing, cycles of reciprocal retaliation can perpetuate an unending series of revenge murders.<sup>15</sup> Ritual sacrifice is the socio-cultural mechanic that has been collectively instituted to serve as a surrogation for violence that can short-circuit the cycle. Girard therefore argues that:

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<sup>13</sup> See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul (1950).

<sup>14</sup> See Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, Marjorie Kerr Wilson, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (1966).

<sup>15</sup> See further the lucid discussion of Girard's views in Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, ed. *Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Transformation* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (1987), pp. 1-70.

"[Ritual] sacrifice is the most crucial and fundamental of all rites . . . it is also the most commonplace" [1977:300]

In summarizing the significance of Girard's thesis regarding ritual sacrifice, Burtan Mack puts the conclusion this way:

"All systems that give structure to human society have been generated by it: taboos, codes of etiquette, patterns of exchange, rites and civil institutions. Thus a theory of sacrifice has produced a comprehensive account of human social formation, religion and culture."<sup>16</sup>

While many have found Girard's thesis compelling, especially within the context of an analysis of Judeo-Christian derivative societies and cultures, it is but one etiological view of the origins of ritual. There is no argument here that the Girard/Freud/Lorenz thesis regarding ritual as a substitutive means for coping with violence is invalid. It is, however, directed at only one direction of the relationship between ritual and violence: how violence generates ritual.

In the descriptive second part of this essay, I have endeavoured to convey how the climate of fear and social anomie created by unprecedented and extended campaigns of political violence led, *not* to the generation of ritual, but to its temporary paralysis, and with its temporary paralysis, a suspension of ritual expressions articulating the normative world view. Caught in a vice-like grip between two opposing perpetrators of violence, most Kandyan villagers simply retreated to an anti-social *modus vivendi* shewing virtually all participation in public rites, those which might ultimately be linked to the genre of sacrifice and those (contra Girard) which cannot. Therefore, at least within the context of recent Sinhala experience, violence cannot be identified solely as the ultimate originator of ritual, but it must also be recognized as that mode of human behaviour that radically inhibits ritual articulations in general, particularly those which ostensibly mitigate against violence *per se*, e.g. *pirit*, the perahara, etc. While under normal conditions, ritual may serve as a social "braking mechanism" for violence, under others violence is so paralytic that it leads to ritual's suspension.

There is, however, a plausible and relevant dimension of Girard's theoretical musings. It is to this aspect of his theory that I now turn to in conclusion.

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<sup>16</sup> Mack, *op. cit.*, p.7.

## IV

Girard has argued that when a society fails to address the problem of rivalry by means of effective ritual devices, violence is inevitable. But once violence, inherent destructive behaviour, is unleashed, it is often "generative" in its consequences. He has argued that the origins of religion and culture are precisely the consequence of society learning to cope with violence. For Girard, religion and culture are the products of creative confusion (the necessary redirection of aggressions and the consequent displacement of guilt). It is here that his psychology of victimization seems quite relevant to the recent Sinhala experience, particularly to the "victimization" of Rohana Wijeweera.

As a charismatic champion of the rural underprivileged, Wijeweera symbolized a righteous struggle to some and the threat to order by others. That is, in Wijeweera was a figure who at once represented the frustrations and hopes of those cut off from access to material prosperity and upward social mobility on the one hand, and a violent threat to the structures of civilized existence on the other. Wijeweera lived a life of violence and died at the hands of violence. His death, however, marked a pivotal moment in the recent Sinhala experience, a moment followed by a gradual return to the normative *status quo* (evidenced in ritual, I argue, by the massive pilgrimages to Sri Pada and Kandy) in society. It produced, as Girard and Lorenz would argue, a cathartic effect. In this context, it would seem that the death of Rohana Wijeweera, at least functionally, had effects parallel to those normally attributed to ritual sacrifice. Certainly to his followers, Wijeweera's death was understood as a great sacrifice. To his opponents, it was understood largely as a matter of karmic retribution.<sup>17</sup> But what is interesting is that for both sides, Wijeweera's death signalled the beginning of a new phase. On the JVP side, it meant reorganization in the face of confusion and a new agenda of tactical retreats. In a sense, the JVP had been "out-violenced" by the government. To the government, Wijeweera's killing meant victory and vindication. Whatever it meant to these two enemies, to the common people held hostage amidst the carnage, it seemed to mean catharsis, the release of tension, and a good deal of what Girard calls "generative scapegoating"<sup>18</sup> A suitable "victim" had been found who at once could either be mythologized as a martyr, or could be branded with blame.

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<sup>17</sup> It was not uncommon during the worst days of violence to hear Sinhalese rationalize killings as the inevitable consequence of actions performed by the victims in previous lives.

<sup>18</sup> A detailed discussion of these terms is found in Rene Girard, "Generative Scapegoating", *Violent Origins*, pp. 73 - 145.

Following Wijeweera's death, as fear of violence began to gradually abate in Sinhala upcountry regions, public ritual acts affirming the traditional world view seemed to be participated in with a pent up vigour. Here it is interesting to note that the two valorized symbols which became the object of mass religious devotion following this liminal period of uncertainty and fear were the Footprint and the Tooth Relic of the Buddha, symbols which represent the normative expressions of *lokottara* (ultimate) and *laukika* (this-worldly) aspirations in Sinhala culture.<sup>19</sup> Reading these ritual signs, these indices of Sinhala social health, it appeared that at least a sense of order, or a confidence in its restoration, was being established in the minds of many people.

Lack of prosperity and blocked accesses to power are the probable causes of violence in the first place, and remain critical issues in Sri Lanka. If these basic conditions are not assuaged, a return to uncertainties in the normative world view, repeatedly shocked by recurrent violence, is certainly not out of the question.

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<sup>19</sup> See my *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokitesvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka*, New York: Oxford University Press (1991), pp. 19-26, for a further discussion of the significance of these categorically definitive terms in traditional Sinhala culture.



## SŪTRA SANNAYAS AND SARANAMKARA: CHANGES IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BUDDHIST EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

A striking feature of Buddhist manuscript evidence from eighteenth and nineteenth-century Sri Lanka is the large number of Sinhala-language commentaries on Pāli *suttas*. These commentaries, known as *sūtra sannayas*, and/or as *sūtra vistara sannayas*, were composed in large numbers beginning in the middle of the eighteenth century. In what follows, I present the historical context for this change in Buddhist textual practices, explaining how the emergence of these commentaries was part of broader changes in Sri Lankan Buddhist monastic life. Examining two *sūtra sannayas* more closely, I explore several features of their commentarial style which made them useful in training monks as preachers. I go on to analyze the impact of this new commentarial style on Buddhist communities in Sri Lanka more generally, arguing that they played a central role in the formation of a new Buddhist "textual community."

### What is a *Sūtra Sannaya*?

A *sūtra sannaya* is a type of commentary, distinguished by the type of text on which it comments and by the way in which it comments. As the name suggests, *sūtra sannayas* are commentaries written on Buddhist *suttas* (*sūtras*, to use the Sanskrit term which was usually used by the Sinhala writers of these commentaries), or the discourses attributed to Sakyamuni Buddha. In principle, a *sūtra sannaya* could be written for any *sutta* found in the Pāli *tipiṭaka*. In fact, the manuscript evidence shows that *sūtra sannayas* were written for a much smaller number of *sūtras*, which appear to have been the favourite discourses of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Buddhists. Judging from extant manuscripts, the *paritta* (or *pirit*) *suttas* -- including Metta Sutta, Maṅgala Sutta, Karaṇīyametta Sutta, and Dhajagga Sutta, for instance -- were among these favourites. Among the other popular *suttas* we find Dhammacakkappavattana

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is respectfully dedicated to Professor P.B. Meegaskumbura, who has so generously shared his knowledge with me, and to Godwin Samararatne, whose kindness and wisdom have enriched my visits to Sri Lanka. Any faults herein, of course, are solely mine.

Sutta, Mahāsaṭipatthāna Sutta and Brahmajāla Sutta.<sup>2</sup>

A *sannaya* is an explanation or exposition (*vyāhyāva*) which may be an elucidation of meaning (*arthavivarāṇaya*) or an exposition of detail (*vistara kathanaya*).<sup>3</sup> Here the distinction between elucidation of meaning and exposition of detail roughly parallels that between *padavaṇṇanā* and *aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* in the Pāli commentarial traditions. That is, in both instances, the first commentarial style--*arthavivarāṇaya* or *padavaṇṇanā*--focuses on the immediate meaning of the word or phrase by unpacking grammatical compounds and providing synonyms while the second -- *vistara kathanaya* or *aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* -- explores the broader possibilities for meaning by placing a word or phrase within a more extensive narrative context.<sup>4</sup>

The *sūtra sannayas* produced in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Sri Lanka consistently combine the two functions of elucidating basic meaning and providing more detailed exposition. The commentary written in Sinhala for a Pāli *sutta* within a *sūtra sannaya* will, for instance, provide a simple translation of a Pāli word or phrase, which also clarifies tense, number, etc. However, the style of commentary used in the *sūtra sannayas* does not restrict itself to a word-for-word translation, or to an analysis of grammatical structure. Rather, *sūtra sannayas* typically introduce phrases, and sometimes longer sentences and even short narratives, to elaborate the Pāli word or words in question.

A simple example can be drawn from the opening lines of a *sūtra sannaya*, which comment upon the "evaṃ me sutam" which starts a Pāli *sutta*. The Sinhala commentary typically first explains that "me" means "by me." It then goes on to explain, for instance, that the manner in which the *sutta* was heard is the manner in which it was heard by the Venerable Kassapa at the First Council. Other straightforward examples include the way in which the Pāli term "bhagavā" is often given a lengthy comment which elaborates particular virtues

<sup>2</sup> Somadasa's (1959) *Laṅkāvē Puskola Pot Nāmāvaliya* is one source of evidence for the popularity of particular *sūtra sannayas*. My recent work in temple libraries in the Kandy and *Sat Koralē* areas shows that the *sūtra sannayas* mentioned here also consistently dominate temple collections.

<sup>3</sup> See Sorata (1963) sv. *sanna*.

<sup>4</sup> See Bond (1982, esp. pp. 149-50) for a useful discussion of Pāli *aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*.

of the Buddha, or the way in which the Sinhala comment explains how certain Pāli place names are derived (such-and-such happened there, etc.). Below I will present some examples of more elaborate *sūtra sannaya* commentary.

To clarify the structure and function of *sūtra sannayas* we can also use the Sinhala-language distinction between *arthavyākhyāna* and *dharmavyākhyāna*. While *arthavyākhyānas* focus on authoritative sources word for word, *dharmavyākhyānas* (like the *Saddharmaratnāvalīya*) are bound only to convey the idea of the original. As commentarial works which contain a substantial proportion of detailed exposition, the *sūtra sannaya*'s function is not exhausted by the relatively restricted exegetical aims of *arthavyākhyāna* texts. Their adherence to the word order and structure of the Pāli texts upon which they comment, however, prevents them from attaining the level of sustained and independent narrative characteristic of *dharmavyākhyānas*. A *sūtra sannaya* is best understood as an intermediate form between the narrowest and broadest Sinhala exegetical styles.

*Sūtra sannayas* appeared as early as the twelfth century but were, in Somadasa's words, only "a minor literary genre prior to the eighteenth century" (1987, x). The production of *sūtra sannaya* texts began in the twelfth century and ceased in the fifteenth for reasons which remain unclear. It is likely that the early *sūtra sannayas* drew on earlier (5th-7th century) translations of Pāli *suttas* into Sinhala but this cannot be confirmed as none of these earlier translations are extant.<sup>5</sup> Śrī Dharmakīrti analyzes the prominence of *sannayas* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in terms of linguistic change within Sinhala culture, arguing that works written in the Sinhala language of the earlier Anuradhapura Period were no longer accessible to later readers of Sinhala and that new commentarial works were necessary to mediate between Pāli and Sinhala (1961, 136).

### Why Write *Sūtra Sannayas*?

For those interested in placing textual production within a broader historical context, the sudden emergence of *sūtra sannaya* commentaries in the eighteenth century provides an intriguing puzzle, leading us to ask: what changes in Buddhist institutions and/or devotional practices brought the *sūtra sannaya* to prominence at this time?

<sup>5</sup> In this regard see Godakumbura (1955, p. 23).

When we look for other evidence of Buddhist life during this period which might shed light on such questions, we find that the first *sūtra sannaya*--called *Sārārthadīpanī* (or, Illuminator of Excellent Meaning) -- written since the fifteenth century was written sometime between 1739 and 1747 by a novice monk named *Vēlivīṭa Saraṇamkara* living in the Kandyan Kingdom. We also find evidence which points to a reorganization of monastic institutions in the mid-eighteenth century, one which included the development of a new educational system in which Pāli instruction and trained preaching played a major role. In what follows I will explore the reasons or the popularity of *sūtra sannayas* in this context, and the way in which they were used within the newly organized monastic, and especially educational, system.<sup>6</sup>

### Decentralized Monasticism

In the early part of the eighteenth century, *upasampadā* festivals ceased to be held because the necessary monastic quorum no longer existed. Thus, despite the fact that *upasampadā* was reintroduced twice from Southeast Asia, in 1596 and 1697, the community of *upsampadā* monks did not take strong hold. The last *upasampadā* monk during this period was *Hulaṅgamuvē Jinadāsa*, who died in 1729 (Dewaraja 1988, 166). The absence of higher ordination during this time is important not only because it may have allowed for (and resulted from) altered expectations of monastic discipline but also because it meant the absence of certain collective monastic observances, like the recitation of the *pātimokkha* on *uposatha* days and the delegation of authority over younger monks during *upasampadā*, which helped to create and maintain a clear and centralized system of monastic organization and administration.

Despite the fact that monks no longer attained *upasampadā*, and no longer participated in many of the acts of the monastic community for which *upasampadā* monks are responsible, many Buddhist temples were not uninhabited. They were, instead, maintained by men who lived as novice monks, or by monks who had chosen to give up their *upsampadā* status while

<sup>6</sup> Others have noted the popularity of *sūtra sannayas* in eighteenth-century Sri Lanka, and have linked this popularity to the preaching practices of that period (Sannasgala 1964, 492 and Somadasa 1987, ix). However, the precise institutional context in which the *sūtra sannaya* commentarial style developed, and its impact on Sri Lankan Buddhism, has not yet been examined.

retaining temple positions. Although such monks did not have upasampadā status, it appears that at least some of them (those in the wealthier temples or with good family connections) had high social standing and participated actively in the administration of the Kandyan Kingdom.<sup>7</sup> These monks, sometimes called gaṇinnānses, also preached to lay men and women. According to some accounts, these monks were also active as doctors and astrologers, while looking after temple lands and living with wives and children.<sup>8</sup> This may be true, at least in part, but it is difficult to develop a clear picture of the gaṇinnānse lifestyle because, as I have argued elsewhere, our evidence of it consists of highly rhetorical statements written by monks and laymen who wished to distance themselves from their gaṇinnānse predecessors (Blackburn 1997):

There is evidence to suggest that learning was not absent from Sri Lankan Buddhist communities after the death of Parakramabahu VI in 1465, but that it became increasingly determined by local factors, lacking the strong educational infrastructure which had characterized the most stable political domains during the reign of Parakramabahu VI of Kotte (De Silva 1992, 95-7; Mirando 1985, 19-20).

Two particularly influential eighteenth-century hagiographies are usually cited as evidence for the low level of Buddhist education from the late fifteenth to the early eighteenth centuries. These works, the *Samgharājasadhucariyāva* and the *Samgharājavata*, describe the life and work of the monk named Vēliviṭṭa Saraṇaṃkara who became a key monastic leader in the mid-eighteenth century and was active in the process of monastic reorganization which I will describe in more detail below. These works describe Saraṇaṃkara's attempts to educate himself in heroic terms, emphasizing, in particular, the lack of teachers skilled in Pāli, and the dearth of Buddhist manuscripts.<sup>9</sup> Although, as I hope to show below, it is important not to underestimate the impact of Saraṇaṃkara's learning and leadership on Buddhism in Sri Lanka, careful historical work requires that we do not too quickly dismiss the years immediately preceding his labours as an age of ignorance.

<sup>7</sup> For details in this regard, see Dewaraja (1988).

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Ratnapala (1971, p. 97; pp. 107-8), SSC (14), and SV (58, 80). In what follows, SSC refers to pages from *Samgharājasadhucariyāva*, SV to verses from *Samgharājavata*, CV to verses from *Cūlavamsa*, and SD to pages from *Sārāthadīpani*.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, SSC (15-21).

If Vācissara is correct, both gaṇinnānses and lay people living in the early eighteenth century were familiar with portions of the jātaka corpus, although for many that familiarity would have come through Sinhala rather than Pāli, and through hearing rather than reading. Vācissara describes a style of religious instruction in which gaṇinnānses recited Pāli jātakas before explaining their meaning in Sinhala (1964, 50).

Robert Knox, in his account of Kandyan culture written about his stay in the region during the 1660s, gives clear evidence of religious instruction in which a sonorous recitation (probably in Pāli) is followed by an explanation of its meaning in more accessible language (1966, 141). It is likely, especially in the light of Hēvāvasam's comments on seventeenth-century Buddhist literature (1966, 8-9) that this preaching worked with a jātaka-based corpus.

The early works of Saraṇaṃkara themselves indicate that, in addition to the jātakas, other Buddhist works were available. Sārārthasaṅgrahaya, written at the invitation of King Narēndrasimha, clearly shows the influence of the Visuddhimagga, Milindapaṇha and Saddharmaratnāvaliya. Sārārthadīpanī, the first of the new generation of *sūtra sannayas*, written between 1739 and 1747, draws on the fifth-century Pāli aṭṭhakathā tradition for *paritta suttas*, either directly or as mediated through thirteenth-century works.

If eighteenth-century sources like the Saṃgharājasadhucariyāva are accurate in this regard, it appears that Saraṇaṃkara sought out Buddhist texts and teachers from various Buddhist temples as he began to write his own works and to train his students.<sup>10</sup> We have accounts of Saraṇaṃkara's Pāli studies with Levuke and Palkumburē Atthadassi, and know that Atthadassi was the chief student of one of the last upasampadā monks in the eighteenth century, Vaṭapulūvē, and that Atthadassi taught Levuke (Hēvāvasam 1966, 20). The situation in southern Sri Lanka appears to have been similar. Siṭṭināmaluvē Dhammajotī, a monk from Tangalle who became one of Saraṇaṃkara's first students, is reported to have travelled from temple to temple in the southern region, collecting available works in both Pāli and Sinhala before going to the Kandyan Kingdom to study with Saraṇaṃkara (Hēvāvasam 1966, 33). Abhayaratna describes a situation in which texts related to the tipīṭaka teachings were safeguarded, and in which particular works were considered to be particularly useful as baṇa pot (works of basic education for beginning monks) were copied and used, as were the jātakas (1991, 231).

All of this suggests that in the early part of the eighteenth century, Buddhist education was not absent, but that it depended greatly on local circumstances: educational opportunities depended on the student's commitment to seeking learning, the knowledge of nearby teachers, on the texts which those teachers had obtained through their own monastic lineages and on the texts which were favoured for preaching and ritual purposes.

### Centralizing and Systematizing Monastic Education

In the 1740s, a new monastic group began to form under the leadership of Vēlivīṭa Saraṇaṃkara. This group, called the Silvat Samāgama (the Disciplined Group), are said to have been attracted by the commitment to learning and monastic discipline showed by the novice Saraṇaṃkara. Saraṇaṃkara, who came from a prestigious up-country family with ties to the court of the Kandyan Kingdom, was born in 1698. In 1714 he became a novice monk under Suriyagoda Kitsirimevan Rājasundara, who had received upasampadā during the reign of King Vimaladharmasūriya II, and had subsequently given up his upasampadā status to live as a gaṇinnānse (Hēvāvasam 1966, 19). After learning Pāli grammar from Levuke and Atthadassi, Saraṇaṃkara in turn taught his two chief followers, Siṭṭināmaluvē and Iipāṅgamuvē, and continued to study on his own. As these three travelled throughout the Kandy and Sat Koralē regions, they began to attract others to the Silvat Samāgama.

The fortunes of the Silvat Samāgama waxed and waned in response to competition from other monks affiliated with the two main temples in Kandy -- the Malvatu and Asgiriya Vihārayas -- and in accord with court politics. Eventually, Saraṇaṃkara received more consistent support from King Narēndrasimha, who sponsored the establishment of Niyamakanda as an educational centre. Saraṇaṃkara's fortunes grew further in the early years of Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha's reign. In 1753, with royal support, a group of monks was brought to the Kandyan Kingdom from Siyam to restart the practice of upasampadā. From 1764 onwards, independent upasampadā festivals were held at both the Malvatu and Asgiriya Vihārayas for monks affiliated with the new Siyam Nikāya, the monastic fraternity established in 1753 with the arrival of upasampadā from Siam. The growth of the Siyam Nikāya involved monks from the Kandy and Sat Koralē regions as well as from the south. The 1750s and 1760s saw the rise of new monastic lineages affiliated with the Siyam Nikāya, and an elaborate system of monastic administration which linked together monks from large parts of Sri Lanka.

The changing nature of Buddhist education in the eighteenth century, and the place of *sūtra sannaya* commentaries within this education, cannot be adequately understood without reference to the rise of the Silvat Samāgama and the formation of the Siyam Nikāya. Under Saraṇaṃkara's leadership, monks of the Silvat Samāgama began to study in new ways. This training, in turn, shaped the nature of monastic administration within the emerging Siyam Nikāya. Saraṇaṃkara's power and the authority of the Siyam Nikāya were due, to a significant extent, to the way in which these monks were able to identify themselves as, and be identified as, authoritative by virtue of their education. In addition, the educational system which developed under Saraṇaṃkara created and helped to sustain the strong linkages between the up-country, Sat Koralē and the southern temples, which began to make the Siyam Nikāya a large and influential monastic institution.

For the sake of convenience, it is possible to divide the emergence of this new monastic educational system into four stages. The first was the development of temple schools in places influenced by the Silvat Samāgama. The second was the establishment of Niyamakanda as an educational centre prior to the reintroduction of upasampadā from Siam. The establishment of a number of other educational centres in the up-country after 1753 marks the third stage, and the introduction of the new up-country educational system to temples in Sat Koralē and the southern areas under Dutch control forms the fourth.

According to Hēvāvasam (1966, 20), education under Saraṇaṃkara's leadership was characterized by four class divisions. The first class was for students without knowledge of the Sinhala alphabet, the second for students with some knowledge of the alphabet, and the third was for students who were already somewhat skilled at reading manuscripts. The first three classes included both lay and monastic students. The fourth class, restricted to novice monks, was devoted to a more detailed study of manuscripts for those who were inclined to take upasampadā. Abhayaratna (1991, 233; 242) states that the third level of education focused on subjects relating to exposition, and that *baṇa daham* pot were used to provide novice monks with an introduction to the dhamma.

The approach to learning established by Saraṇaṃkara was apparently intended to make students familiar with Sinhala and Pāli grammar (and in some cases also Sanskrit), to increase their understanding of both dhamma and vinaya, and to accustom them to expository discourse (Abhayaratna 1991, 241). *Sūtra sannayas* were appropriate for use in the third and fourth class. Extant manuscript evidence suggests that some *sūtra sannayas* were sometimes included with other basic texts in the *baṇa daham* pot used by novice monks but were



most often studied separately in order to become familiar with a single sutta or group of related *suttas*.

Several aspects of the mid-eighteenth-century educational context made the *sūtra sannayas* a particularly valuable part of the emerging educational system. The fact that Buddhist monastic education during the period immediately preceding Saraṇaṃkara was decentralized and unsystematic meant that the presence of teachers trained in Pāli and in the more sophisticated literary Sinhala at local temples was by no means guaranteed. During the first stage of the emergence of education influenced by Saraṇaṃkara, students studied first from the itinerant teachers of the Silvat Samāgama and were then forced to work independently. *Sūtra sannayas* were a natural pedagogical tool in this context, since these commentaries provided a copy of Pāli *suttas*, explained the narrative and grammatical contents of a Pāli *sutta*, and suggested patterns of exposition suitable for preaching. Even in the absence of a teacher, a student with a knowledge of the alphabet and a limited understanding of Pāli language could work alone.

In the second and third stages, when students studied at Niyamakanda and other educational centres later established in the up-country, *sūtra sannayas* appear to have served several purposes. The descriptions of study provided by the Saṃgharājasādhucariyāva suggest that the composition and study of *sūtra sannayas* provided a way for those skilled in Pāli to demonstrate that skill and to provide texts for the use of students. In the context of these educational centres, the study of *sūtra sannayas* written by these monastic teachers provided a natural way to deepen students' familiarity with Pāli grammar and with the contents of specific *suttas* used in preaching and ritual recitation.

In the fourth stage, when students trained in the up-country educational centres returned to southern and Sat Koralē temples to teach students there and develop their own student following,<sup>11</sup> the *sūtra sannayas* served an important purpose in bringing the grammatical and interpretive skills of up-country educators to the temples in other regions. The use of *sūtra sannayas* meant that even a monk who had spent a short period of time at up-country studies could bring the tools for further study and teaching with him when he left. The use of *sūtra sannayas* in this way helped to standardize the educational experience

of monastic students over a relatively large geographical area.<sup>12</sup>

Many monks did, in fact, spend short periods of time in the Kandy area. After the reintroduction of higher ordination from Siam in 1753 and the appointment of Saraṇamkara to the position of Saṃgharāja, or leader of the monastic community, monks from all parts of the island who sought full ordination were required to come to the capital of the Kandyan Kingdom, the hill town of Kandy, in order to receive higher ordination at the Malvatu and Asgiriya Vihārayas. Their stay in Kandy was not limited to the ordination ritual but included a stay, of perhaps two months,<sup>13</sup> at one of several newly established centres for monastic instruction in the Kandy region (Dewaraja 1988, 118-9; Malalgoda 1976, 65). These monks remained a part of the Kandyan educational environment even after their departure for home temples, by sending their brighter students to up-country educational centres when possible (Hēvāvasam 1966, 42-71), maintaining links with Kandy for the higher ordination of novice monks and receiving guidance from Saraṇamkara with regard to monastic education and discipline (Vācissara 1964, 211). Ties between Kandy, the Sat Koralē and the southern region strengthened significantly after 1753 despite unsettled political conditions.

It appears, from the accounts found within several works written during the eighteenth century by those affiliated with Saraṇamkara's monastic community, that the monks of the Silvat Samāgama, and later of the early Siyam Nikāya, emphasized the importance of Pāli study and trained preaching in monastic education. We do not yet have enough detailed information about monastic education in earlier periods of monastic reorganization to fully evaluate the novelty of these preoccupations. It is clear that skill in Pāli was a crucial

<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that everyone who encountered a *sūtra sannaya* encountered precisely the same text in the same way, since there were certain to be slight differences in redaction and interpretation. However, since *sūtra sannayas* were typically written by highly esteemed teachers, as the *Samgharājasādhucariyāva* indicates, it is likely that their contents would have been relatively stable and interpretation of them relatively conservative. The two manuscript copies of Saraṇamkara's *Sārārthādīpanī* at which I have looked (British Library OR 6600 (151) and Colombo Museum Library 1465), for instance, are virtually identical to the 1891 printed edition.

<sup>13</sup> According to the Vihārādhipati at Mādavela Rajamahavihāraya, 15 Julv.

marker of monastic leadership and expertise, as we see in contents of the *Samgharājasadhucariyāva*, where reading and reproducing Pāli commentarial literature, and the composition of Sinhala commentaries for Pāli texts, are repeated tropes in monastic biography.<sup>14</sup>

The *Samgharājasadhucariyāva* also contains consistent references to Saraṇaṅkara's skill as a preacher, and to the ability of key monastic students to preach the dhamma. Saraṇaṅkara is described, for instance, as someone who "has many manuscripts written and expounded, has preaching studied and encourages preaching to the populace."<sup>15</sup> Another monk, Irivinnē Vipassi "lived in the Badhagamu monastery and was very skilled in writing the small letters used in writing memorization books appropriate to grammar and preaching."<sup>16</sup> Moreover, accounts of Saraṇaṅkara's students' skill in preaching suggest a sophisticated level of exposition ability possible only after considerable training. They were able to declare the meaning of the Pāli *nikāyas*, commentaries, etc. and to preach in a royal assembly relying on works like the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* and the *Brahmajāla Sutta* while providing various elaborate and special explanations for three nights running.<sup>17</sup>

Shifts in narrative emphasis between the *Mahāvamsa*, early chapters of the *Cūlavamsa* and the final chapters of the *Cūlavamsa* written by Buddharakkhita also point to the critical importance of preaching to the monks of Saraṇaṅkara's period. Looking at these works we find that, at the time of Saraṇaṅkara, instruction, rather than construction, is considered the crucial mode of devotional activity.

### Using *Sūtra Sannayas*

Although *sūtra sannayas* were used to help monks learn to read Pāli *suttas* and to train monks as preachers, these commentaries were almost certainly not used directly as a text from which to preach. Although Somadasa (1987, ix) and Vācissara (1964, 19) suggest that *sūtra sannayas* were at least sometimes used directly, during two-seated preaching in which Pāli recitation and Sinhala

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<sup>14</sup> SSC (37-53).

<sup>15</sup> SSC (22).

<sup>16</sup> SSC (51).

<sup>17</sup> SSC (55).

exposition proceeded in tandem, a loose examination of extant *sūtra sannaya* manuscripts makes this seem quite unlikely. The size of the script used in writing *sūtra sannayas* is consistently small enough to make them awkward as a preaching aid. This becomes even clearer when *sūtra sannaya* manuscripts are compared with *paritta* manuscripts, or "*pirit pot.*" Many of these collections of Pāli *paritta suttas* are written in a strikingly large clear hand, large enough to serve as a reminder during the act of recitation itself.

*Sūtra sannayas* were written, read and copied as a guide to the comprehension of Pāli *suttas*. Their word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase translation of Pāli *suttas* helped to clarify Pāli meanings and structures, while additional commentarial detail helped to create an interpretative foundation from which monks preached. As two monks recently reminded me, one learns how to explain ideas to others by exploring their meaning in one's own studies.<sup>18</sup>

Let us look more closely at two *sūtra sannayas*, as examples of the genre, to see how they helped students develop an expository command of Pāli *suttas* and how Saraṇaṃkara and other teachers were able to use these commentaries while building new educational networks. Since composition of *sūtra sannayas* began again with Saraṇaṃkara's *Sārāthadīpanī*, a collection of *sūtra sannayas* on *suttas* from the *paritta* collection, I have chosen to use the *Mettā Sūtra Sannaya* and *Dhajagga Sūtra Sannaya* from *Sārāthadīpanī*.

The *Mettā Sūtra Sannaya* begins with a lengthy origin story which explains the context in which the Buddha taught the *Mettā Sutta*. The *sutta* was preached, we are told, to show that a monk who cultivates *mettā*, or loving kindness, as a meditative technique deserves the support of the laity. The Buddha made this point in order to arrest an exodus of monks from the order, caused by a previous sermon in which the message of the *Aggikkhandopama Sutta* overwhelmed many of the listening monks and drove them to live as devout laymen. The story concludes with a reference to the benefits of cultivating loving kindness, thus reinforcing the importance of the *sutta*'s contents.

After a full repetition of the origin story in Pāli, the *sutta* itself begins. The Buddha announces that there are eleven benefits of loving kindness and

<sup>18</sup> Śrī Narēndrārāma Rajamahavihārayādhipati, 30 June, 1997 and  
• Mulkirigala Rajamahavihārayādhipati, 6 July, 1997.

proceeds to enumerate them, introducing the list with the words: "monks, there are eleven welcomed benefits of loving kindness -- mental liberation --when it is followed, developed, made much of, practised, made a foundation, when it is familiar and well undertaken" and concluding the list with a similar sentence: "monks, these are the eleven welcomed benefits of loving kindness -- mental liberation -- which is followed, developed, made much of, practised, made a foundation, when it is familiar and well undertaken."<sup>19</sup>

The commentary provided for these lines indicates the way in which the *sannaya's* narrative detail reinforces patterns of explanation and association through the repetition of phrasing and the consistent use of simile. Comment on both instances of "which has been practised," for instance, proceeds with identical phrasing: "which has been accomplished, as a plough is put down after use."<sup>20</sup> The commentary also maintains throughout the verbal association between mental freedom and freedom from the obstructions to liberation which are imaginatively described as enemies. Similes such as these help to animate the commentary.

As the sutta unfolds, the *sannaya's* amplification of the original Pāli becomes increasingly vivid. The comment on the benefits of "awaking happily" and "avoiding nightmares" first reproduces a brief Pāli commentarial passage and then expands this into a dramatic account in Sinhala reinforced by another Pāli commentarial passage which follows. The first Pāli commentarial passage says, "While others wake unhappily, rolling over, yawning and moaning, not waking thus one wakes steadily and happily, like a blossoming lotus."<sup>21</sup> To this the Sinhala commentary adds:

If other people awake unhappily, tossing and constricting [their bodies] and feeling uneasy, [this] person awakes differently, comfortably, without movement, like an opening lotus... if [he] dreams he has appropriate dreams. [In the dream he] is worshipping devotional memorials or listening to religious instruction. While other beings have nightmares like being thrown down

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<sup>19</sup> SD (87).

<sup>20</sup> SD (87-90).

<sup>21</sup> SD (87).

a mountain or being oppressed by beasts of prey or being surrounded by thieves, this person doesn't have such nightmares.<sup>22</sup>

Here the *sūtra sannaya* provides the details of cause and effect which can be used to help develop a preacher's exhortation.

The *Metta Sūtra Sannaya* then proceeds to comment densely upon two further benefits of loving kindness. After explaining the benefit of being "dear to people" the *sannaya* comments upon the next benefit of being "dear to non-humans."

Or, if the person is dear to humans he is also dear to non-humans, like the elder monk Visakha. The story of the elder monk Visakha was put down in detail in the explanation of meditation through amity in the *Visuddhimagga* and has been included in the *Maṅgalasūtrakathā* of my *Sārārthasaṅgrahaya*. This should be understood by looking at it as it appears there.<sup>23</sup>

To explain the benefit of being "unharméd by poison, sword or fire" the *sannaya* provides a brief word gloss before turning to a Pāli commentary to provide illustrative examples:

... examine the commentarial section written for this... It is said that fire [doesn't affect] the body of one living according to loving kindness (like the laywoman Uttaraya) or poison [one] like the monk Cullasiva who preached the *saṃyutta* [nikāya, a section of the Pāli canon] or sword [one] like the novice Saṃkicca. [These things] don't have an effect, don't enter, don't disturb that person's body.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, (88).

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, (88-89).

These passages from the *sūtra sannaya* help us to see that one of the ways in which *sūtra sannayas* were useful in educating preachers was their invocation of particular characters as illustrative examples. In some cases, as in the references to Uttaraya and Cullasiva, above, the preacher seems to have been expected to have further details about the illustrative character in mind as part of an established repertoire. In other cases, as with the reference to Visakha, the author of the *sūtra sannaya* provides explicit direction to the commentary's user about the way in which the character's story can, and should, be understood.

Within the broader context of a newly organized monastic community under Saraṇaṃkara's leadership, and the program of education associated with it, Saraṇaṃkara's reference to his own work, *Sārārthasaṅgrahaya*, is significant, for it helps us to see some of the subtle ways in which the new *sūtra sannaya* commentaries helped to shape and unify a community of monastic students under Saraṇaṃkara's guidance. Other *sūtra sannaya* composers, like those mentioned in the section from Saṃgharājasādhucariyāva mentioned above, participated in this process also by including their own guiding references in these commentaries.

The *Dhajagga Aūtra Sannaya* starts with the Pāli sutta directly, without an elaborate origin story. The Pāli sutta begins with the Buddha addressing a company of monks gathered in a monastery in Jeta's grove. He recounts an instance of divine battle in which Sakka, lord of the gods, addressed these gods living in the Tāvatiṃsa heaven saying,

If, sirs, going into battle you feel fearful, or stiffen with dread, or your hair stands on end, then you should look at the top of my battle standard. Whatever hair-raising fear or stiffening with dread you might experience will disappear as you look at the top of my standard.<sup>25</sup>

The Sinhala commentary begins by providing a relatively simple word gloss and explanation of this passage. Soon, however, the *sannaya* intensifies the narrative

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, (109).

with a vivid excursus in which Sakka and his standard are described from the perspective of his watching subjects:

The chariot of Sakka, king of the gods, was one hundred and fifty yojanas long. From the middle of the chariot to its far end was fifty yojanas. From the middle of the chariot to its front was fifty yojanas. The [central] box was fifty yojanas. Doubling that measurement they say you come up with three hundred yojanas. A white umbrella measuring three yojanas was raised up on top. A thousand horses were yoked [to the chariot] and that's not all regarding the rest of the accoutrements. Its standard was two hundred and fifty yojanas high. When the wind hit the standard it made a sound like that of the five types of instruments [as if saying], "look at this standard!" To those looking at that chariot our king arrived and stood in the midst of a retinue like an upright pillar. Fear disappeared [as they thought], "why should we fear?"<sup>26</sup>

Sakka's voice resumes the sutta's Pāli narrative with further instructions to his subjects in which he offers alternative sources of solace to those who do not (presumably cannot, perhaps because of their vantage point) look at the top of his standard. The symptoms of fear are guaranteed to disappear for those looking at the top of battle standards belonging to Pajāpati, Varuna and Isana. Once again, after a minimal word gloss on these lines of the Pāli sutta, the *sannaya* introduces a narrative aside which articulates the divine hierarchy of the Tavatimsa heaven.

These three divine kings have complexion and longevity equal to that of the divine king Sakka's. Among them, the divine king Pajāpati holds the seat second to the divine king Sakka's. Varuna the divine king receives the third seat. The divine king Isana receives the fourth seat.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, (110).



Thus should their personal power be shown.<sup>27</sup>

At this point the Buddha's voice resumes in the Pāli *sutta* as he sets the stage for a specifically Buddhist challenge to Sakka's power as a defense.

If that hair-raising fear, or stiffening with dread which occurs to those looking at the top of the divine king Sakka's standard--or the top of the divine king Pajāpati's standard, or the top of the divine king Varuna's standard, or the top of the divine king Isana's standard--doesn't disappear, what is the reason? Monks, Sakka, lord of the gods, is not without passion, not without hatred, not without delusion. He has fled, afraid, tense, trembling.<sup>28</sup>

Once again Sārārthadīpanī's commentary moves beyond a limited gloss to the Pāli words quoted above in ways which explain the narrative movement of the *sutta* and, even more importantly, reinforce a specifically Buddhist explanation of Sakka's weakness.

... the point is: if fear [felt by those looking at Sakka's standard] has been held at bay it doesn't remain so for long if they are looking at the standard of a Sakka who is disposed to flee, shaking, because he has not destroyed the defilements [mental impurities which impede progress toward liberation]. After describing the way Sakka, king of the gods and one of the four divine kings praised here, shook with fear and fled what more could one say about the other three? Thus, by association with the statement that Sakka, king of the gods, trembled and fled I have indeed said that the remaining three were disposed to flee, trembling with fear. Or, it should be understood that [this] isn't stated separately since the trembling and flight

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, (112).

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

of the other three who follow him [Sakka] is understood by saying that he shook with fear and fled. This is because Sakka, king of the gods, dominates the others.<sup>29</sup>

Here Sakka's failure to destroy the defilements further elucidates the Buddha's previous statement that Sakka is still bound by passion, hatred and delusion--a standard negative triad in Buddhist discourse.

The Buddha's first alternative to seeking refuge in Sakka and his companion gods is refuge in the Buddha himself, but the transposition is not straightforward. The scene changes and gods in battle are replaced by meditative monks. Sakka is also displaced indirectly after his frailty, in Buddhist terms, is shown by the section of sutta and commentary we have just examined.

Monks, I speak thus. If, monks, you are fearful, overwhelmed by hair-raising fear when you are in the forest, at the foot of a tree or in an empty building, at that time you should remember me thus: he is fortunate, an arahat, perfectly enlightened, endowed with wisdom and virtue, in very good circumstances [Pāli: sugato], knower of the world, unrivalled, guide of people who must be trained, teacher to gods and men, Buddha, fortunate one.<sup>30</sup>

Sārārdhadīpanī's commentary to these lines of the Pāli sutta deserves a close examination. The narrative detail provided for each epithet of the Buddha is elaborate and, taken together, provides something like a summa of a Buddha's enlightened state. This is an excellent example of the way in which the *sannaya's* provision of detail sustains patterns of association to be used in reflection on, exposition of, and engagement with, the teaching.

Look, for instance, at the *sannaya's* treatment of several epithets. Once again the canonical Pāli appears in capitalized text.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, (112-13).

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, (113).

ARHAT̄, an arahat; because he doesn't do improper things in private, because he is worthy of things like the four requisites, because he has destroyed the enemies, the defilements.... IN VERY GOOD CIRCUMSTANCES [sugato], called "sugato" because of speaking well and having gone well, and because of having gone to nirvana which is termed a good place, and because of having a good journey...GUIDE OF PEOPLE WHO MUST BE TRAINED, because of establishing malleable people in the refuges, moral conduct, etc. and training [them]; TEACHER FOR GODS AND MEN, because he gives instruction in the various appropriate ways with compassion for his world and other [worlds], for gods and men... FORTUNATE ONE [bhagavā], called "bhagavā" because he has destroyed all of the defilements such as passion and because he possesses merit accomplished through the perfections such as generosity and moral conduct.<sup>31</sup>

Creative etymology takes a central role in the commentary's elucidation of detail as we see in the comment on "arahat" and "sugato" in particular. Exegesis of "arahat" plays on the Pāli word for "private" [rahas] as well as the Pāli verb "arahati" (to be worthy of) and the Pāli noun "arī" (enemy) while that for "sugato" explores possible uses of the root "gam" (to go) for which the past participle is "gato" here combined with the prefix "su-" meaning "good." Note that the *sannaya*'s explanation of "bhagavā" heightens the contrast between the Buddha and Sakka with the description of the Buddha as one who has destroyed the defilements such as passion, the cause of Sakka's weakness earlier in the sutta.

By providing elaborate detail for each of the Buddha's epithets the commentary also evokes aspects of Buddhist devotion which occur independently of the Dhajagga Sutta in Buddhist practice. This is a particularly striking example of the ways in which the contents of a *sūtra sannaya* echo and sustain broader patterns of association in Buddhist discourse. The epithets found in the Pāli sutta discussed above have a long history in meditation practice and are now

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, (113).

regularly chanted in devotional recollection of the Buddha and are known in that context as the 'iti pi so gathā' or the verses which explain the Buddha's nature.<sup>32</sup> There is evidence from the eighteenth or early nineteenth century that they were also used as protective verse.<sup>33</sup>

In the final portions of the sutta the Buddha exhorts the listening monks to recollect the teaching if they do not recollect him, and to recollect the monastic community if not the teaching. Any of these three refuges, declares the Buddha, will vanquish hair-raising fear and paralysis. As the Buddha announces the value of recollecting the teaching and the monastic community he declares the standard epithets appropriate to each refuge, epithets which, like the Buddha's epithets, are part of devotional recitation. Once again the commentary, with its detailed explanation of these epithets, participates in a complex of echoes and expository elaboration.

The conclusion of the *Dhajagga Sutta Sannaya* further reinforces the contrast between Sakka and the Buddha which has been gathering momentum as the sutta and its commentary progress. The Pāli sutta's section on recollection of the monastic community ends with a summary statement linking the efficacy of recollecting the monastic community to the character of the Buddha: "Monks, the hair-raising fear or paralysis which arises will disappear for those recollecting the monastic community. Why? The Buddha, monks, an arahat, perfectly enlightened, without passion, hatred and delusion, fearless, unparalyzed, courageous didn't flee." The commentary to these lines draws attention to the earlier characterization of Sakka as fearful and defiled through its re-articulation of the sutta word by word. And, in a subtle but powerful conclusion which unites the force of creative etymology and the developing contrast between Sakka and the Buddha as sources of refuge, the *sannaya* runs: "the Buddha said this; said this Dhajagga Pirit; further the 'sugato,' In Sakka's place, said..."<sup>34</sup> The Buddha has, in the course of the *sūtra sannaya*, redefined the terms of power, replaced Sakka as refuge and overtaken Sakka's place at the head of his own retinue.

In this *sūtra sannaya*, as in the *Metta Sūtra Sannaya*, the commentarial details provided in Sinhala enrich the sutta's narrative and provide natural points

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, *Visuddhimagga* p.7.

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Walters. Personal communication.

<sup>34</sup> SD (113)

of elaboration for a preacher inclined to heighten the sutta's drama or to elaborate the Buddha's power. In doing so, the *Dhajagga Sūtra Sannaya* uses vivid imagery and word play which can become part of the student's own expository repertoire.

### Textual Communities

In seeking to understand the role of *sūtra sannayas* within a changing monastic environment and a new system of Buddhist education, I have stressed the ways in which these commentaries helped students study Pāli language, and to develop the command of specific *suttas* necessary for their work as preachers. The fact that *sūtra sannayas* were used in these ways within an extensive and clearly structured educational system under Saraṇaṃkara and others associated with the new Siyam Nikāya suggests that *sūtra sannaya* commentaries had a significant impact on lay and monastic Buddhist communities in much of Sri Lanka. In order to describe this impact more clearly, I draw on the concept of a "textual community" developed by Brian Stock in his study of the impact of literate textuality on eleventh-century European culture.

There Stock uses the term "textual communities" to describe "groups of people whose social activities are centred around texts, or, more precisely, around a literate interpreter of them." Although texts, in Stock's view, need not be written nor their auditors literate, they exert a formative influence on the textual communities' behaviour and attitudes. In particular, he claims, a culture in which texts and the literate are accepted as authoritative and influential is characterized by a move toward what he calls "an intellectualism inseparable from the study of texts" (1983, esp. 522-4). I do not embrace Stock's view that an increasingly literate and textual culture is characterized by specific forms of rationality or the implication that text-centred activities necessarily dominate cultures in which texts and their interpreters are accorded authoritative value. Despite these reservations, however, Stock's terminology can be used in a more limited sense which helps to illuminate the effect of the emergence of *sūtra sannayas* on Buddhists in eighteenth-century Sri Lanka. For these purposes, I adapt the term "textual community" to mean a group of individuals united by their exposure, through reading and listening, to certain ideas and patterns of discourse which draw upon and are sustained by written textual sources.

This usage of the term textual community provides a useful way of looking at the interlocking processes of monastic education and the performance of preaching, both of which were informed by the use of *sūtra sannaya* commentaries initiated by Saraṇaṃkara and carried out by his students.

Monastic education, characterized by reading, listening, memorizing, composing and copying, gave students many opportunities to engage the contents of favourite Pāli *suttas* through *sūtra sannayas*. In doing so, these students accumulated a textual familiarity which included patterns of association between *suttas* and between *suttas* and other Buddhist texts, as well as strategies for the exposition of important *suttas* and key ideas contained within them.

Monastic students trained within the educational networks established by Saraṇaṅkara and sustained by the emergence of the Siyam Nikāya formed a textual community in the sense I outlined above. They were not the only textual community formed by and around the *sūtra sannaya* commentaries, however. Because the commentarial detail of *sūtra sannayas* fed into the act of Buddhist preaching, these commentaries played a pivotal role in the creation of a wider textual community of lay people and monastics, whose level of formal education varied widely but whose imaginative dispositions may have had much in common because of their shared experience of particular Pāli *suttas* and interpretations of them. The interlocking practices of education and preaching in eighteenth-century Sri Lanka created a situation in which complex combinations of oral and written culture helped to sustain certain "habits of thought,"<sup>35</sup> or dispositions to reflect on ideas and behaviours in particular ways, common to a range of readers and listeners, regardless of their educational level or status.

In developing the idea of shared habits of thought formed and sustained by a textual community and applying it to eighteenth-century (and later, but that is another story) Sri Lankan Buddhists, I do not mean to suggest that all members of this textual community thought alike, even about matters relating to morality and devotion. Rather, members of this new textual community shared a certain kind of narrative experience, and a language to be used in thinking about the topics found in Pāli *suttas*.

As Carruthers puts it in her description of a different set of readers and listeners,

The Latin word *textus* comes from the verb meaning "to weave" and it is in the institutionalizing of a story through *memoria* that textualizing occurs. Literary works become institutionalized as they weave a community together by providing it with shared experience and a certain kind of language ... (1990, 12).

## Conclusion

Responding to evidence of changing textual preoccupations among Buddhist authors in eighteenth-century Sri Lanka, I have tried to show the way in which the renaissance of Sinhala commentaries on Pāli *suttas*, in the form of *sūtra sannayas*, was linked to broader changes in Buddhist monastic organization and education. Uniting a literary analysis of *sūtra sannayas* and a historical analysis of religious institutions, this study suggests some of the ways in which a new educational infrastructure shaped the Buddhist environment of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Sri Lanka.

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19/23

## MAHĀYĀNA THERAVĀDA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MAHĀVIHĀRA<sup>1</sup>

The reading of Sri Lankan Buddhist history during the Anurādhapura Period, which informs this essay, may seem a radical departure from what we thought we knew about that subject. On the basis of new interpretations of the extant evidence (*vaṃsas*, inscriptions and other archaeological remains, reports of the Chinese pilgrims), I maintain--at least for the sake of argument-- that the self-identity "Theravāda Buddhist", and also the self-identity "Mahāvihāran", were comparatively late developments in Buddhist history. Both had their origin only around the third or fourth century, A.D. I moreover maintain that the Theravāda was in its origin primarily a Mahāyāna or proto-Mahāyāna school, and that the Mahāvihāra's origin occurred in an explicit rejection of those dominant Mahāyāna teachings.

These surely *are* radical departures from the still-standard textbook portrayals of Theravāda as the original and exclusively Hīnayāna Buddhist school, and of the origin of the Mahāvihāra at the primordial moment (3rd century, B.C.) when King Devānampiyatissa was first "pleased" by Arahant Mahinda's explication of the Buddha's *dhamma*. But I suspect that readers who are familiar with the textual and epigraphic evidence, and with recent secondary scholarship on Anurādhapuran history and archaeology, will find the details of my argument so much in keeping with both as to appear mere summations of already-well-known facts.

The sense of departure comes from my having stepped back to see that, taken together, all these well-known facts render seriously problematic the very foundations of the standard account of ancient Sri Lankan Buddhist history. Even so, given that these foundations were laid by British Orientalist scholars of the early to mid-nineteenth century (especially Hon. George Turnour, Major Jonathan Forbes and Sir James Emerson Tennent) who derived them from sometimes uninformed readings of the Pāli *vaṃsas* and who lacked the wealth

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revised version of a paper presented at the Ceylon Studies Seminar, the University of Peradeniya, April 10, 1997. I am grateful to the organizers of the seminar for the opportunity it presented to think in macro-scale terms about the implications of some of my recent studies. I would also like to express my gratitude to Whitman College for sabbatical leave in which to pursue the research and writing of this essay, and to the Graves Foundation for a teaching award which

of critical scholarship and archaeological and epigraphic evidence long since available, it is hardly remarkable that the standard account should appear so full of holes to late twentieth century scholars.<sup>2</sup> Rather, what I find remarkable is that this early first attempt at interpreting the evidence of Anurādhapurān history persists so vehemently in educated circles all over the world today, as though the limitations of those pioneering scholars--their uncritical gleaning of "historical facts" from the *vaṃsas*, their virtual ignorance of the external evidence--were hallowed Buddhist truths.

Lest I be misunderstood--for I stand in awe of the Mahāvihāra's phoenix-like rise to glory, and in gratitude for its preservation of the Pāli Canon--at the outset I should affirm my own belief that the *Nikāyas* and the *Vinaya* preserve the actual teachings of the Buddha and his earliest disciples, as closely as we are ever likely to know them. Though it is now clear that the texts we have today were edited to reflect the refined grammar and orthography of Pāli, even as late as the time of Buddhaghosa,<sup>3</sup> much more ancient manuscripts (of the 1st and 2nd centuries, A.D.) such as the Gāndhāri *Dharmapada* and the recently discovered Karoṣṭhi fragments of *Suttanipāta* and other portions of the *Suttapitaka* make it impossible to doubt that the Pāli Canon is faithful to truly ancient originals in some cruder, but comparable, vernacular Prakrit.<sup>4</sup> I also believe that many institutions of the Mahāvihāra, including the Sacred Bodhi Tree and the Thūpārāma, truly had their origin in the earliest stages of Sri Lankan Buddhist history. Archaeology and epigraphy fully agree with the

<sup>2</sup> I have examined the history of the study of the Pāli *Vaṃsas* and have attempted to reconstruct the history of their original production in "Buddhist History: The Pāli *Vaṃsas* of Sri Lanka", forthcoming in Ronald Inden, ed., *Rethinking the Medieval* (Oxford University Press).

<sup>3</sup> For a very useful discussion of the status of the Pāli Canon see Steven Collins, "The Very Idea of the Pāli Canon" in *The Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990): 89-126.

<sup>4</sup> See John Brough, ed. *The Gāndhāri Dharmapada* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1962; London Oriental Series, volume 7). The Karoṣṭhi manuscripts, discovered in the last decade and recently purchased by the British Museum, appear to be the earliest Buddhist manuscripts now in existence. While editing has only just begun, some provocative samples were provided by Richard Salomon at the Annual Conference of the American Academy of Religion, New Orleans, November 1996.

*vamsas* and commentaries on much of Mahāvihāran history.

But I want to argue that the Mahāvihāran authors of these *vamsas* and commentaries -- like all historians and commentators of all times and places -- were engaged in *interpreting* these ancient texts and monuments for particular reasons and according to particular ways of thinking which were current in fourth and fifth century Anurādhapura. In other words, the *vamsas* and commentaries represent fourth and fifth century *claims* about Buddhist and Anurādhapuran history. They should not be treated as transparent windows into the *actual* pasts about which these claims were made, although it is all too true that since the 19th century most of ancient Sri Lankan history has been written as a mere paraphrase of the Mahāvihāran texts. But proceeding as though the *vamsas* and commentaries had been written by 19th century German empiricists committed to some sort of "scientifically" objective narrative of the facts, rather than by medieval Buddhist monks who interpreted reality according to medieval Buddhist epistemology, is especially problematic because we know that at the time of their production, the Mahāvihāran accounts of history were fiercely debated and countered by chroniclers and commentators in the rival Abhayagiri and Jetavana *vihāras*.

Though these rival historical accounts and commentaries no longer exist to study in detail because of the ultimate triumph of the Mahāvihārans during the later medieval period, we can be certain that the rivals advocated very different interpretations of Buddhist and Anurādhapuran history. In their view, as evidenced by copper and gold manuscripts recovered from stupas at their respective monasteries,<sup>5</sup> the early teachings (*Śrāvakayāna*) represent merely the first stage in an unfolding *Buddhavacana*, producing ever-more-profound insights into reality in step with an unfolding Buddhist future. The true meaning of the ancient canon was to be understood in the light of the later revelations known collectively as the Great Vehicle (*Mahāyāna*) and as a literary genre, as the *Vetullavāda* or *Vaitūlya* or *Vaipūlya sūtras*.

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<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive consideration of Mahāyāna's once-strong presence in Sri Lanka, and its lasting impact in the hearts of Kandyan villagers into the present, see John C. Holt, *Buddha in the Crown: Avolokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). For a particularly startling Mahāyāna manuscript find see S. Paranavitana, "Indikaṭusāya Copper Plaques," *Epigraphia Zeylanica III* (1928-33): 199-212.

Moreover, as we can be certain from later Mahāvihāran citations, the rivals maintained that the Abhayagiri and Jetavana *vihāras* existed first, and that the Mahāvihārans later broke off from them.<sup>6</sup> That claim is worth repeating: the rivals maintained that the Mahāvihāra was a late, break-away corruption of the earlier and more venerable teachings and practices preserved by the Abhayagiri and Jetavana/Dakkinārāma monks and nuns. The virulence with which *Vaṃsatthappakāsini* refutes this rival historical construct would imply that some Anurādhapurans believed it viable even as late as the tenth century, A.D. Certainly at least the rivals themselves believed it; *Vaṃsatthappakāsini* relates that they wrote it down and stored it (*likkitvā thāpesum*--this could also mean the rivals erected inscriptions to this effect). And the overwhelming evidence of the ruins themselves,<sup>7</sup> not to mention the explicit statements of the Chinese pilgrims<sup>8</sup> and even of the later Mahāvihāran chroniclers,<sup>9</sup> is that for virtually all of Anurādhapuran history the Abhayagiri and Jetavana *vihāras* were grander and more favoured establishments than the Mahāvihāra. This would suggest that, more often than not kings and courtiers also supported the rivals' interpretations. The Mahāvihāran historical construct, which maintains that the full meaning of

<sup>6</sup> G.P. Malalasekera, ed., *Vaṃsatthappakāsini* (London: P.T.S. 1935) I:175-76.

<sup>7</sup> It was no mere coincidence that the attention of the archaeological excavation of Anurādhapura in the last quarter of the nineteenth century focused on the Abhayagiri; in the pre-excavation state of things its preeminence would still have been obvious. Even with so many of the splendours of the Abhayagiri now in museums in Colombo and London, the sheer immensity of the archaeological site there, not to mention the size of the stupa, belies its one-time glory.

<sup>8</sup> See the accounts of Sri Lanka by Faxian and Xuanzang in Samuel Beal, tr., *Si Yu Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981 [1884]).

<sup>9</sup> Even a cursory reading of the medieval chronicle *Cūlavāṃsa* will confirm this assertion. In addition to a great preponderance of kings in the portion of the Anurādhapura Period it covers (3rd-10th c., A.D.) giving more and better to the Mahāvihāra's rivals, these kings actually attacked the Mahāvihāra periodically. See for example Cv 39:15, 39:41-43, 41:31-32, 41:37-40, 41:96-99, 42:12, 42:43, 42:63-66, 45:29-31, etc. (citations to *Cūlavāṃsa* correspond to Wilhelm Geiger's Pāli Text Society edition of same).

the Buddha's revelation is contained in the ancient *Tipiṭaka*, to be explicated through commentaries rather than the composition of new *sūtras*, and which therefore gives historical primacy to the Mahāvihāra and treats the Abhayagiri and Jetavana monks as decadent splitters-- this Mahāvihāran narrative of "the facts" that we all know so well from modern history books was not merely contested during the Anurādhapura Period; it was the minority opinion.

It is possible to be much more specific about the contours of these ancient historical debates on the basis of the extant Mahāvihāran texts themselves and also the basis of certain presences and absences in the epigraphic and archaeological records. A longer, technical paper appearing in another publication spells this out in detail.<sup>10</sup> For the present, I hope it will suffice to look at three basic premises of the Mahāvihāran interpretation and discuss the evidence which calls them into question as "objective" records of "the facts". These basic premises are: (1) that the Theravāda tradition as such originated at the First Great Council (2) that the Sri Lankan Theravāda has always been an exclusively Hīnayāna ("Earlier Vehicle") school and (3) that the Mahāvihāra was the original and essential home of true Theravāda in Sri Lanka. I will deal with each of these three claims in a little detail, then at the end return to the more general discussion of this monastic rivalry and its implications for standard views of Anurādhapuran Buddhist history.

The Mahāvihāran commentaries and chronicles agree in repeating a basic history of the Theravāda tradition which has it originate in the mouth of the Buddha himself, get codified at the First Great Council, get re-affirmed in two subsequent Councils and get transmitted by Arahant Mahinda to the first Sri Lankan monks, at the Mahāvihāra.<sup>11</sup> But the problems with treating this narrative as an objective record of the facts far exceed the doubts raised by the numerous contradictory claims about the Buddha and his earliest followers, about the transmission of the True Dharma, and about the dissemination of the religion beyond Magadha, which are known to have existed among all the different

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<sup>10</sup> Jonathan S. Walters, "Mahāsena at the Mahāvihāra: Propriety, Property and the Politics of History in Medieval Anurādhapura," forthcoming in Daud Ali and Avril Powell, ed., *The Uses of the Past in South Asia* (Oxford University Press).

<sup>11</sup> The relevant texts of the Anurādhapura Period are: *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvāṃsa*, *Samantappāsādikā*, *Vaṃsatthappakāsini* and *Mahābodhivaṃsa*

Buddhists of ancient Asia.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, as historians we are confronted by the fact that there is no mention of "Theravāda" or "Sthaviravāda" as this separate Buddhist *nikāya* in any literary source prior to the early 4th century, A.D. composition of *Dīpavaṃsa*. The term is not found in its technical sense in any of the ancient canonical texts which we believe to have been codified at the First Great Council, nor for that matter even in the late canonical texts which self-admittedly postdate the Third Great Council. The term is also absent from the South Asian epigraphic record until the 3rd century, A.D., despite the fact that for three centuries prior to that date kings and other patrons had been making explicit donations to other well known groups such as Sarvāstivādins, Mahāsāṃghikas and Sammitīyas. This epigraphic date of 3rd c., A.D. for the origin of the self-identity "Theravāda Buddhist" corresponds precisely to André Bareau's conclusion, based on an exhaustive study of the known doctrines of the 18 schools, that Theravāda doctrine emerged out of a Sri Lankan branch of the Vibhajjavāda school only in the third or fourth century, A.D.<sup>13</sup>

And when the term "Theravāda" finally does first appear in the epigraphic record, in the third century, A.D., it certainly does not affirm the Mahāvihāran version of things. Though the inscriptions in question were found in India, at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, they are explicit that the "Theriyas" at that site were not Indian at all; they were Sri Lankan (Tambapannidīpaka). The implication that Theravāda was originally and exclusively a Sri Lankan *nikāya*, and not an Indian one, is explicit in the later lists of the 18 schools preserved in Northern Buddhist traditions, which describe the branches of the Theravāda as Mahāvihāravāsī, Abhayagirivihāravāsī, and Jetavanīya.<sup>14</sup> Rather than as an

<sup>12</sup> I characterize these debates and set them in their larger pan-Buddhist context in "Finding Buddhists in Global History," forthcoming in Michael Adas, ed., *Global History III* (Temple University Press) and as a separate pamphlet in the American Historical Association's series on global history.

<sup>13</sup> André Bareau, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule* (Saigon: École Française D'Extreme Orient, 1955):169.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, André Bareau, "Trois Traités 3: Le Compendium Descriptif des Divisions des Sectes dans le Cycle de la Formation des Schismes (*Samayabhedoparacanacakrenikāyabedhopadarcanasamgraha*) des Vinītadeva" *Journal Asiatique* CXXV (1957): 1-10.

Indian tradition which was later taken to Sri Lanka, the rest of the Buddhist world understood the Theravāda to be a Sri Lankan innovation which was later taken to India.

And not just to any place in India. The term "Theravāda" first emerged at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, a site of extreme importance for the study of the origins of the Mahāyāna.<sup>15</sup> In addition to numerous Buddhist tales which connect this site with Nāgārjuna himself, as well as other important Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteśvara and Śrīmālā Devī, there is clear epigraphic evidence that this was a site devoted to the vanguard proto-Māhāyāna revelations of the day, being propounded there by Aparasāilas, Pūrvasāilas, Bahuśrūtīyas, Mahiśāsakas and other radical groups.<sup>16</sup> The very presence of these "Theriyas" at the site suggests that they were what the Chinese pilgrims would later call the "Māhāyāna Theravādins" of Sri Lanka. Let me repeat that one too: in the ancient Buddhist world the phrase "Mahāyāna Theravāda"--which sounds so inappropriate to modern ears--was so ordinary as to require no further comment at all.

The Chinese knew that the Abhayagirivihāra was the richest, most favoured and most populated monastery in the kingdom, a cosmopolitan center where Hīnayāna *and* Mahāyāna scriptures from all over India were studied. Faxian specifically mentions that his long-term hosts at the Abhayagiri gave him

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Matsuda, "Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist Schools" in *Asia Major* II (Lipsiae, 1925) 1-78.

<sup>15</sup> For relevant epigraphs see D.C. Sircar and A.N. Lahiri, "Footprint Slab Inscription from Nagarjunikonda," *Epigraphia Indica* 33:247-50 and J. Ph. Vogel, "Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nagarjunikonda," *Epigraphia Indica* 20:22-23. I have discussed these references to Sri Lankans and the epithets used for them in *Rethinking Buddhist Missions* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1992) II:302-306.

<sup>16</sup> These four are, together with the Sri Lankan Theriyas, actually named in the inscriptions. For legends associating the site with Nāgārjuna and the origins of Mādhyāmaka see Nalinaksha Dutt, "Notes on the Nāgārjunikoṇḍa Inscriptions," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 7,3 (September, 1931) esp. pp. 634-639. On Nāgārjunikoṇḍa as the site where *Śrīmālāsīṃhanādasūtra* was composed see Alex and Hikedo Wayman, tr., *The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā* (New York and London: Columbia University of Chicago, 1992) II:302-306.

texts in Buddhist Sanskrit (Fan), and the great Buddhologist Bernard Faure once told me that according to their colophons and the Chinese imperial bibliographies a sizable portion of the extant Mahāyāna *sūtras* in the Chinese *Tripitaka* was originally obtained in Sri Lanka.<sup>17</sup> The presence and even dominance of these Mahāyāna Theravādins over their rivals at the Mahāvihāra, whom Hsüan-tsang tellingly describes as "opposed to the Great Vehicle and adher[ing] to the Lesser Vehicle,"<sup>18</sup> is manifest in the archaeological and epigraphic records of the Abhayagiri's splendour.

Thus the Mahāvihāran claim that Theravāda is originally and exclusively a Hīnayāna school was certainly not universally believed in the ancient Buddhist world, nor probably was it believed by much of anyone except by the Mahāvihārans themselves. Even in Sri Lanka, even at the end of the Anurādhapura Period, this claim must have seemed absurd; the prominent contemporary displays of Sri Lankan Theravāda identity included huge Bodhisattva statues all over the Island--think of Buduruwegala!--and Mahāyāna inscriptions and a lavish, cosmopolitan Abhayagiri, which Leslie Gunawardana has shown us sponsored pan-Buddhist dialogues, sent students to Nālandā University and even established a branch vihāra in Java!<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, this claim of the Mahāvihārans--that they preserved from the beginning an original and exclusively Earlier Vehicle Theravāda--was belied by more than the sheer presence, if not the dominance of Mahāyāna (and some evidence suggests even Tantrayāna) Theravādins throughout the history of

<sup>17</sup> This was an off-hand comment, in response to a question I raised at a seminar in Chicago a decade ago; I do not hold Prof. Faure to this view. A study of the role Sri Lanka plays in Mahāyāna literary history would be of great service to the field. Of course the most famous example is the *Lankāvatārasūtra*, supposedly preached atop Śrī Pāda. Prof. B. Karunatilleke pointed out, when I delivered an earlier version of this paper, that some legends make Padmasambhavā, Bodhisattva founder of Tibet's Tantric traditions, a Sri Lankan monk!

<sup>18</sup> Beal, *Si Yu Ki*, 1:247.

<sup>19</sup> See R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979) esp. nn. 250-55.



Anurādhapura.<sup>20</sup> More important, there are strong reasons to suspect that the identity "Mahāvihāran" itself--the very existence of "the" Mahāvihāra--was a late development which *post*-dated the rise of the Mahāyāna. This might be obvious even upon first glance--if on a pan-Buddhist scale the hallmark of Mahāvihāran Theravāda has been its staunch rejection of all Mahāyāna teachings, then how could this self-identity have existed prior to the Mahāyāna itself?

But this sort of question-begging is by no means our only basis for questioning the Mahāvihāran construct of its own history. Rather, we are confronted with the fact that, like the term "Theravāda", so the term "Mahāvihāra", in its technical sense, is absent in the literary and epigraphic record until a very late date.

In the canonical texts, the term *mahāvihāra* denotes only its non-technical sense of "big monastery." Even in Buddhaghosa's commentaries, the term is sometimes used quite generically. At one point Buddhaghosa glosses the term *mahāvihāra* as "large monasteries which held 12,000 bhikkhus, the same as the Abhayagiri, Cetiyaḡiri and Cittalappabbata *vihāras*."<sup>21</sup> The term was so generic that it could even be applied to major rivals! In the early Brāhmī inscriptions the term is never found, which makes us wonder how "the" Mahāvihāra could have existed at that time.<sup>22</sup> In the later Brāhmī inscriptions

<sup>20</sup> John Holt (*Buddha in the Crown*) has discussed the evidence of Tantric practices in Sri Lanka. The sort of "Theravāda Tantrique" which Francois Bizothas identified in Southeast Asia also has strong remnants in rural Sri Lankan healing practices (involving the use of *pirits*, *mantras*, *yantras*, talismans, altered states of consciousness, manipulation of supernatural beings, secret lineages of teacher-student transmission, forms of initiation, etc.) Indeed, Roger Jackson has pointed to Tantric themes even in the "official" Theravāda liturgical text, the *Jināpañjaraya*.

<sup>21</sup> W. Stede, ed., *Sumangala-vilāsini*, *Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīgha-nikāya* Pt. 2 (London: Luzac & Co., 1971) p. 478 (*Mahāpadānasuttavaṅṅanā*).

<sup>22</sup> I make this statement on the basis of S. Paranavitana's *Inscriptions of Ceylon, Volume One: Early Brāhmī Inscriptions* (Colombo, 1970). These early inscriptions, mostly carved on caves, date from about the 2nd c., B.C. to about the 1st c., A.D. They stand in stark contrast to the specifications of recipients that characterize the Later Brāhmī

we find numerous specific references to "Abhayagirivihāra" and "Dakkhinārāma" (a group which also [according to the *vamsas*, later] occupied the Jetavanavihāra) but only one reference to "Mahāvihāra," and that in a fragmentary inscription which primarily refers to the rivals and in which "Mahāvihāra" may just be a synonym for one or both of them.<sup>23</sup> Those earliest known Theravādins at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa similarly refer to themselves as "residents of the Mahāvihāra" even though they clearly did not belong to "the" Mahāvihāra as we now know it.

"The" Mahāvihāra is unambiguously named, for the first time, in *Dīpavaṃsa*, the fourth century, A.D. literary source which not coincidentally also contains the first literary reference to "the" Theravāda as an exclusively Hīnayāna school. In *Dīpavaṃsa*, there is no ambiguity; the terms Theravāda and Mahāvihāra denote precisely what we take them to mean today. This fact corresponds nicely with all the above-mentioned evidence suggesting that the terms took on these technical meanings around the third or fourth century, A.D. The question then becomes, what happened around the time of *Dīpavaṃsa* to produce a Mahāvihāran self-identity based strictly upon an Earlier Vehicle interpretation of the Theravāda legacy? If the historical construct propounded by *Dīpavaṃsa* and later Mahāvihāran sources is not a transparent window into an

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Inscriptions of the 1st to about the 5th c., A.D. Compare Paranavitana, *Inscriptions of Ceylon, Volume Two Part I: Late Brāhmī Inscriptions* (Moratuwa, 1983) and the following note. This source is hereafter cited as "ICILI" followed by page number.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, unambiguous donation to the Abhayagiri were made by Amaṇḍagāmaṇi (19-29, A.D.; cf IC II,i:46) and Gajabāhu I (114-136; cf IC II, 1:88) as well as by ministers or generals of Mahallaka Nāga (136-43; IC II,1:109) and Bhātika Tissa II (143-67; IC II,1:113). Gajabāhu also made a donation to the Dakkhinārāma (which would become the Jetavana division; UC II,1:87) as did several officials of an unidentified king around the beginning of the 3rd century (*Epigraphia Zeylanica* VII:99-106). The sole mention of "mahāvihāra" in the Later Brāmī Inscriptions which is taken to refer to "the" Mahāvihāra belongs to a minister of Bhātika Tissa II (IC II,1:116-17). For a comprehensive study of the evidence available for determining which regional monasteries were affiliated with which disciplinary orders, and similar conclusions about the importance of the Abhayagiri, see Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough*, esp pp. 8-21,36.

actual past, then when and why did it come into existence?

My answer is the same that all the Anurādhapura historians apparently gave to this question: the crucial moment in Mahāvihāran and Hīnayāna Theravāda history was the reign of King Mahāseṇa (274-301, A.D.) I certainly do not need to inform the readers of this journal that *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvāṃsa* and *Vāṃsatthappakāsinī* all end their narratives of Sri Lanka Buddhist history with this critical reign, even though we know from later sources that chronicling proceeded right throughout the Anurādhapura Period.<sup>24</sup> This odd fact has been dismissed by Wilhelm Geiger and others as an accident of the dislocations which Mahāseṇa is said to have caused "the" Mahāvihārans. Because they had to vacate the Mahāvihāra for nine years, it has been asserted, there must have been some break in the chronicling tradition.<sup>25</sup> But this surely does not explain why fully seven centuries later the Mahāvihārans were still narrating all of history as a mere preface to the reign of Mahāseṇa.

<sup>24</sup> The view that the chronologies and other details in the *vāṃsas* are mere fictions has long-since been disparaged, and is falsified constantly in practice by the sometimes uncanny correspondences between the Mahāvihāran histories and the external epigraphic record in Sri Lanka and on the Indian mainland, such as the details of the ascendance of the Pallava king Narendravarmasingha (636, A.D.). Compare Cv XLVII with E. Hultzsch, "Kasakudi," *South Indian Inscriptions* II,4(1913): 353-61. Despite the fact that the status of the Mahāvihāran chronologies still engenders considerable professional debate on a pan-Buddhist scale (as with the date of the Buddha, e.g., Heinz Bechert, "The Date of the Buddha - an Open Question of Ancient Indian History," in H. Bechert, ed., *The Dating of the Historical Buddha* [Gottingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991]1: 234-36), in the case of Sri Lanka the 13th century authors of *Cūlavāṃsa* must have had access to records more or less contemporaneous with events described throughout the medieval history of Anurādhapura.

<sup>25</sup> See Wilhelm Geiger, *The Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvāṃsa and their Historical Development in Ceylon*, tr. Ethel M. Coomaraswamy (Colombo H.C. Cottle, Government Printer, 1908) p.64; cf. Regina T. Clifford, "The *Dhammadīpa* Tradition of Sri Lanka: Three Models within the Sinhalese Chronicles," in Bardwell I. Smith, ed., *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka* (Philadelphia: Animus, 1977)

In other work on the *vaṃsas* I have argued that *Dīpavaṃsa* was in fact composed just after the reign of Mahāsenā.<sup>26</sup> Though the king himself was already dead, the memory of his reign was still fresh. *Dīpavaṃsa* maddeningly omits to give any details of Mahāsenā's reign because its audience is expected already to know them. Rather, its entire account of Mahāsenā is devoted to an almost ranting attack upon certain powerful men nicknamed Dumitta (for Jaṅghamitra) and Pāpa Sona, who are said to have misled the king with lies about the true Dhamma and Vinaya, which *Dīpavaṃsa* refutes in minute detail.<sup>27</sup> These men were "agitated, like putrid corpses covered in black flies, disguised as monks but no genuine monks," "shameless rogues", "ivory whores," "immoral men dressed in delusion" who "secretly connived" to corrupt the king "for the sake of material gain".<sup>28</sup>

The *Dīpavaṃsa*, which self-consciously represents itself as the story of the "Mahāvihāra and "the" Theravāda of the Earlier Vehicle, was thus a polemical tract written just after the reign of Mahāsenā by a group of Buddhists who were still smarting from whatever it is he did. This accounts quite nicely for the claim by *Cūlavāṃsa* that just after the death of Mahāsenā his son and successor Kitti Sirī Meghavaṇṇa approached the Mahāvihārāns, listened to their report "from the beginning" of the damage done by his father Mahāsenā, then affirmed their existence by processing a statue of Arahant Mahinda to the Mahāvihāra and building it up.<sup>29</sup> This report "from the beginning" might very well have been *Dīpavaṃsa* itself.

This then would explain why *Dīpavaṃsa* ends with the reign of Mahāsenā. But the reign of Mahāsenā was already well beyond living memory by the time *Mahāvāṃsa* was composed (last half of the fifth century, A.D.), and was truly ancient history when *Vaṃsatthappakāsini* was written in the tenth

<sup>26</sup> "Mahāsenā at the Mahāvihāra," forthcoming and "Buddhist History: The Pāli Vaṃsas of Sri Lanka," forthcoming.

<sup>27</sup> The specific issues of contention were: the legality of ivory fans (negated by the Mahāvihārāns) and the legality of calculating the age for higher ordination from conception rather than from birth (affirmed by the Mahāvihārāns).

<sup>28</sup> *Dīpavaṃsa* (Oldenberg's edition) 22: 66-76. These are my translations; the phrases are not in the original order.

<sup>29</sup> Cv 37: 53-90.

century, A.D.<sup>30</sup> The reign of Mahāsenā continued to be a watershed in Anurādhapuran history for the entire Anurādhapura Period. Historians continued to discuss and debate it because it continued to have relevance for their 5th or 10th century worlds. Careful exegesis of the *Mahāvamsa* and *Vamsatthappakāsini* accounts of Mahāsenā's reign--the final chapter in those works--shows them to be refutations of a complex series of arguments which were apparently launched by the rivals, including (1) a portrayal of Mahāsenā and his Mahāyāna activities as paradigmatic of outstanding Theravāda Buddhist kingship (2) an attack on the Mahāvihāran *vinaya* (monastic legal code) as late and corrupt (3) a denial of the integrity of the Mahāvihāran *sīmā* (liturgical boundary) and (4) a claim to particular tracts of land in Anurādhapura which the Mahāvihārans also claimed.<sup>31</sup> It is clear from certain statements in *Vamsatthappakāsini* that in arguing these points the rivals were even mustering the *Mahāvamsa* as evidence! In its explicit cursing to hell of the proponents of these arguments, *Vamsatthappakāsini* reveals its own polemical reasons for choosing to "comment" on the ancient chronicle.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that *Mahāvamsa* and *Vamsatthappakāsini* were written for their own times should warn us against taking their narratives of Mahāsenā's reign--our only narratives of Mahāsenā's reign--at face value. The very fact of their being polemical indicates that there were other perspectives in the air, perspectives which were persuasive enough in their own rights to require such elaborate refutation. The later chronicles are not the accounts of eye-witnesses trying to be "objective", they are reconstructions made long after the fact. The eye-witnesses to Mahāsenā's reign were too angry and threatened to simply tell us what actually happened.

Fortunately, there is a piece of epigraphic evidence which helps us to make sense of the historical context in which *Dīpavamsa* was written. This is a badly defaced inscription which Dr. Paranavitana has shown to belong to the time of Mahāsenā, and which was discovered in what Paranavitana identified as

<sup>30</sup> Arguments for the specific dating of these texts (Dpv, ca. 302, A.D.; Mhv, ca. 460 A.D.; VAP, ca. 920's A.D. and 963, A.D.) are provided in my "Buddhist History: The *Pāli Vamsas* of Sri Lanka," forthcoming.

<sup>31</sup> This oversimplifies a very complex argument about the accounts in these texts of Mahāsenā's reign, spelled out at length in my "Mahāsenā at the Mahāvihāra," forthcoming.

the Jetavana ruins.<sup>33</sup> In this inscription, an unnamed king censures the monks of the five residences (*paca-maha-avasa* = *pañca-mahā-āvāsa*) for certain transgressions (*pawe*) which were apparently described at length in the original. They are ordered to study and copy *Vaitūlya* (that is *Mahāyāna*) scriptures, and to recognize the superiority of the Abhayagirivihāra.

As Paranavitana argues, I think rightly, here "the five residences" together constitute what we now call "the" Mahāvihāra. This correspondence is clear in medieval Sinhala sources<sup>34</sup> as well as in the nature of the inscription itself, which attacked Buddhists holding the sort of view that came to characterize "the" Mahāvihāra and, according to "the" Mahāvihārans, that was the true essence of *all* Theravāda. What is startling about this document is that the errant monks are not referred to as "Mahāvihārans" at all; they are simply "the monks of the five residences." In this document, the epithet "Great Monastery" (*mahāvihāra*) is applied only to the Abhayagirivihāra, where the *Vaitūlya sūtras* are preached!

Thus I suggest the following scenario: as is clear from the epigraphic evidence, too, up to the time of Mahāsena there was no "Mahāvihāra" except the Abhayagirivihāra. Theravāda was one of the new radical schools of the day, which was experimenting with the same shift to Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna forms of thought and practice, and the same rush to carve out a separate self-identity

<sup>33</sup> S. Paranavitana, "A Fragmentary Inscription from Jetavanārāma now in the Colombo Museum," *Epigraphia Zeylanica* IV:274ff.

<sup>34</sup> On the Five Great Residences, and the problems caused by the fact that the constitution of the list of five changed over time, see Paranavitana, "A Fragmentary Inscription from Jetavanārāma." pp. 278-79. I agree with Paranavitana's general position that the term must be taken as referring to the monks of "the" Mahāvihāra, especially given the *Mahāvamsa* and *Nikāyasangrahāwa* association of the five with the Mahāvihāra during the time of Mahāsena's elder brother and foe, Jetthatissa, and their predecessor Goṭṭābhaya, who suppressed the Mahāyāna, respectively. I would add that the later texts (such as *Rasavāhinī* and *Suddharmālankāray* which include the Jetavana and Abhayagiri in the list of the five can be understood as the products of a time when the consolidation of the Sri Lankan Sangha under the Mahāvihāra umbrella, and the abandonment of Anurādhapura, made it seem perfectly natural that the term would refer to the five largest monasteries of the late Anurādhapura Period.

within the changing Buddhist world, which were occurring within similar schools across Asia. Though the Earlier Vehicle continued to be studied, it was supplemented with ever-new and no doubt profound revelations ascribed to the Buddha himself and transmitted in the *Vaitūlya sūtras*. These were eagerly embraced by the main representatives of the Theravāda at that time, and for the rest of the history of Anurādhapura, who were headquartered at the Abhayagirivihāra.

During the reign of Mahāsenā, and according to the *vaṃsas* during the reigns of his father and elder brother, a rebellion against this dominant order occurred. Certain monks and nuns, living in the comparatively old monasteries to the south of the city, attacked the vanguard trends we now call Mahāyāna. They rejected as inauthentic the new *sūtras*, and advocated stricter adherence to the teachings and practices of the ancient *suttas* and vinaya. But Mahāsenā, under the tutelage of Sanghamitta, was a proponent of the vanguard Mahāyāna teachings. Indeed, the very inscription in question is carved on Andhran marble which was quarried for the construction of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa and carved in the precise Nāgārjunikoṇḍan style.

In whatever fashion, these monks in the five residences offended Mahāsenā by rejecting his Mahāyāna views and his cosmopolitan connections. They were censured and forced to endure the humiliation of copying the very *sūtras* they so abhorred. When Mahāsenā died and they were given the opportunity to make their case--to Kitti Siri Meghavaṇṇa--they constructed an historical narrative that was to have profound implications for the rest of Buddhist history, not only in Sri Lanka but even in the entire world.

This historical narrative, however significant, was actually quite simple. Constituting themselves as "the" Mahāvihārāns, these monks and nuns argued that precisely because their monasteries were so ancient, and precisely because they defended the integrity and preservation of the most ancient texts, they ought to have a separate existence of their own. Though beginning with Siri Meghavaṇṇa himself--who brought the Tooth Relic to the Abhayagirivihāra--most later kings were more avid patrons of the Abhayagiri and Jetavana rivals, at the same time no later king ever again attempted to eradicate this "opposition to the Great Vehicle" altogether, as Mahāsenā had tried to effect. Rather, for the rest of Anurādhapuran history, all three subgroups of the Theravāda, including the Mahāvihārāns, were allowed their place and generally encouraged to prosper. It is after all part of Mahāyānist ecumenicalism that the Lesser Vehicle had and even has its usefulness--even if the Buddha did preach it to the *śrāvakas* as a mere preparation for the higher revelations of the Great Vehicle.

*Dīpavaṃsa* thus won the existence of an Earlier Vehicle Theravāda at a time when it must have appeared that Theravāda would become an exclusively Mahāyāna school. This was a remarkable achievement, made on the basis of what even today is an extremely persuasive case. No one could have denied, nor could deny today, many of the basic premises of the Mahāvihāran construct; their monasteries really did contain many of the oldest monuments in the kingdom, their canonical texts were universally agreed to be extremely ancient ones upon which all Sri Lankan monasticism had originally been based, and the rivals were only too happy to boast of their Mahāyāna cosmopolitanism. And as the painstaking research of Oldenberg, Geiger, Malalasekera and Adikaram, among others, makes most certain, the Mahāvihāran history really was based upon ancient sources which could be consulted right throughout the Anurādhapura Period. How else could we explain the detailed correspondences between the *vaṃsas* and the ancient epigraphic record, down to the names of specific temples which specific kings built? The stylistic faults of the *Dīpavaṃsa* are largely the result of its meticulous adherence to the original sources which it hastily strung together as proof-texts of its own threatened position.

But as I have already tried to make clear, there were simultaneously premises in the Mahāvihāran case which were anything but obvious and undeniable. Everyone agreed that the monuments in "the" Mahāvihāra were very old, but only the Mahāvihārans took this to imply that they themselves were so old. The rivals pointed out that the Mahāvihārans had their origin in a rebellion against the dominant religious society of the comparatively recent past, and attacked their claim to exist at all when they denied the legality of the *sīmā* by which the five residences were supposedly united into a single "Mahāvihāra". Everyone agreed that the texts of the Pāli Canon were extremely ancient, but only the Mahāvihārans took this to imply that the Pāli Canon alone was therefore worthy of study and commentary. The rivals maintained that precisely because it was so old, it was also old fashioned, worthy of study primarily by those who had not yet realized the real pith of what the Buddha was trying to teach to this world with so much dust in its eyes. Everyone agreed that the Abhayagiri was a rich, cosmopolitan community sporting the vanguard Mahāyāna teachings of the day, but only the Mahāvihārans saw this as a shameful degeneration of the True Dhamma. For the rivals, the True Dharma did not stop with the ancient canon but embraced it and superseded it, ever unfolding in new revelations appropriate to the ever-changing reality within which progress on the path is made.

So persuasive were these rival views that successions of kings in Anurādhapura favoured the rivals over the would-be champions of Earlier



Vehicle exclusivity. And why wouldn't they? The Abhayagiri was devoted to knowing and mastering the latest vanguard trends in a sophisticated, global Buddhist world. The Abhayagiri connected Anurādhapura with Indian universities, Chinese imperial courts, Javanese trading communities--and brought Indian scholars, Chinese ambassadors and Javanese traders to Anurādhapura. The Abhayagiri made Sri Lankan Theravāda--Mahāyāna Theravāda--a real player in the bigger cosmopolis of the day, dominated by Bodhisattva kings trying to transform all of Asia according to the Mahāyāna revelation of universal Buddhahood.

And the Abhayagiri--so far as we know--never denied the relative value of the Lesser Vehicle. They sported their own Lesser Vehicle canon, probably not much different from the Pāli Canon except in minor details. In fact the Chinese knew that the Abhayagiri disseminated its own Lesser Vehicle canon throughout Asia.<sup>35</sup> This made the Mahāvihāran case even harder to argue at the time, for whatever gem of wisdom they discovered in the Pāli canon could easily be assimilated into the ecumenical Mahāyāna vision, whereas any objection that other parts of this ecumenical vision strayed from the earlier teachings could easily be dismissed as proof that Lesser Vehicle adherents really just don't understand the Buddha's Great Message after all.

Still, many of us can find in our own minds the persuasiveness of the Mahāvihāran case. If we agree with the Mahāvihārans that it is hypocrisy to deem "Thera-vāda" anything other than what was taught by the Elders at the Great Councils, then we cannot help but follow them to the conclusion that true Theravāda is essentially and exclusively an Earlier Vehicle school. If we agree with them that the way to update a text is to invent an exegesis or an etymology rather than to compose new words for the Buddha himself, then we cannot help but follow them to the conclusion that the Mahāyāna revelations should be rejected as recent fabrications. If we agree with the Mahāvihārans that oldness itself is something good, something true, something worthy of veneration, then we cannot help but follow them to the conclusion that the Mahāvihāra and its traditions are most deserving of praise and adherence.

Indeed, the Mahāvihāran case finally did prove persuasive, not only for Sri Lanka but also for much of Southeast Asia and even southern China. Though the final victory of the Mahāvihārans over their rivals did not occur even in Sri Lanka until after the 12th century, if at all, at least officially Theravāda was exclusively an Earlier Vehicle school from the end of the Anurādhapura Period

right up to the present. So successful was their ultimate victory over the rivals that today only the Mahāvihāran version remains to be studied directly. So skillful was their use of historical sources that they continue to convince scholars to this day that history happened just the way the Mahāvihārans say it happened.

But however persuasive I do find the Mahāvihāran championing of the Buddha's own teachings as the teachings to study, and of the Buddha's own practices as the practices to employ, I am no longer persuaded by the Mahāvihāran historical construct as such. This of course makes no ultimate difference on the level of belief and praxis--whether they called it Theravāda or not, the Elders at the First Council proclaimed a Dhamma which has been preserved in the world, thanks to the Mahāvihāra Theravādins. But it makes a big difference when we set out to study the religious history of Sri Lanka.

By way of conclusion, then, let me return to the larger picture of Theravāda history. It should now be clear why I am so troubled by the scholarly practice of simply paraphrasing the *Mahāvamsa* as though it were some 19th century German encyclopedia of facts. This goes way beyond charges of "bias". The entire basis of Mahāvihāran historiography was challenged throughout the Anurādhapura Period by much-admired competing perspectives. To treat it as a straightforward narration of facts is to miss the rich history of their own times which texts like the *vamsas* can help us recover, a history of Buddhist debate about the past and its meaning for the present. It is moreover to whitewash earlier history according to the later Mahāvihāran construct--history is still being written by the winners--obscuring so much of Anurādhapura's one-time glory from our view.

In the Mahāvihāran version of things, articulated for the first time by *Dīpavaṃsa*, Theravāda history is "like a great banyon tree; nothing added, nothing lacking." The teachings of the Buddha himself are the roots of the tree, and its strong trunk is the unbroken Theravāda tradition passed down in direct succession through the Three Great Councils to the monks of the ancient Mahāvihāra, and through them to the Mahāvihāran monks of the present. All other Buddhists are like thorns that have grown upon that strong trunk, thorns which arose both in India and in Sri Lanka, at the Abhayagiri and Jetavana vihāras.<sup>36</sup> These Sri Lankan moments of the not-Theravāda are mere

<sup>36</sup> *Dīpavaṃsa* 5:51-2. Note that Dpv omits the final clause, about the thorns that grew up in Sri Lanka. Pleading for the very survival of their monastery, the residents of the five great residences were hardly in a position to challenge the Abhavagiri, which Dpv praises as "beautiful"

aberrations in an otherwise strong and straight tree. This image was codified in medieval texts like *Nikāyasamgrahawa* that portrayed all of Sri Lankan history as a history of protecting the true Theravāda from occasional Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna heresies. And here we can easily recognize our own modern construct: Anurādhapuran history is a pure trajectory of original Hīnayāna Theravāda which gets periodically polluted by some not-Theravāda then purified by the *katikāvatas* of some powerful king, such that it still is (or at least should be) today what it was at the very beginning.

But as I have indicated, key aspects of this construct plainly do not conform to the extant evidence. The Theravāda as such had its late origin in the Mahāyāna, both because the earliest, most favoured and most internationally famous Theravādins were Mahāyāna Theravādins and also because even the Hīnayāna Theravāda of the Mahāvihāra was produced after and in response to the Mahāyāna revelations. To take up a Mahāyāna metaphor; rather than a thorn on the Theravāda, the Mahāyāna teachings and practices of the Abhayagiri and Jetavana vihāras were long considered the flowers at the ends of the branches on the tree which we call Buddhist history. Surely that root--the trunk, the Lesser Vehicle--had to be there. So did all the branches, the eighteen schools which through commentaries and *Abhidharma* traditions supplemented the canon in Hīnayāna ways. But the trunk and the branches only existed, as it were, in order to ultimately make possible the flowers--the expression of the tree's real beauty, and the means by which it grows and spreads into the ever-changing future. In this vision, the Mahāvihārans were like over-zealous gardeners, trying to pluck the tree bare in some foolish belief that only the trunk matters and that a tree is altogether better off without branches or flowers at all.

If as historians we are committed to understanding development and change as it occurs over time, then I would suggest that this latter model, of different branches, *all* of them covered in flowers, growing out of a common, if somewhat gnarled trunk, better fits the extant evidence than does the theory of Mahāvihāran stasis and unanimity. In light of these considerations, I want to conclude by suggesting a basic, tripartite periodization of Theravāda history which emerges in my own study of the hard evidence.

Given the silence in the early epigraphs, it would appear that there was not any marked sectarian consciousness at all--Mahāvihāran or otherwise--during

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and "supreme". The final clause is added only by *Mahāvamsa* (5:13), which was composed in a rare period of comparative strength for the Mahāvihāra.

about the first four centuries after Arahant Mahinda. We could thus term the first stage of Sri Lankan Buddhist history "The Period of Non-Sectarianism". The second stage would be "The Rise of the Abhayagirivihāra" or "The Period of the Mahāyāna Theravāda", which I would date from about the 2nd century A.D. right up to the tenth century, A.D. The third stage would be "The Triumph of the Mahāvihāra" or "The Period of the Hīnayāna Theravāda", which I would date from the tenth century to the present.

During the Period of Non-Sectarianism various Indian Buddhist traditions came to Sri Lanka and were entrenched here. During the Period of the Mahāyāna Theravāda, Theravāda identity was forged and the separate Theravādin *nikāyas* came into existence, with the Mahāvihāra a late and lesser third. In this period Mahāyāna Theravādins were seen by Buddhists in the rest of Asia as the true representatives of Sri Lankan Theravāda, and they took their Mahāyāna Theravāda to other parts of the globe. Though they too arose during the second stage, only during the third stage did Hīnayāna Theravādins finally succeed in gaining hegemony over their rivals. They were henceforth seen by Buddhists in the rest of Asia as the true representatives of the Sri Lankan Theravāda, and only then did they too take their Hīnayāna Theravāda to the far reaches of the globe.

JONATHAN S. WALTERS

THE WHOLE BODY, NOT HEART, AS 'SEAT OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS': THE BUDDHA'S VIEW

Suwanda H. J.  
Sugunasiri

What is the 'seat of consciousness' in Buddhism? This is the question that this essay seeks to answer, understanding the term 'seat', however, as a mere 'concealing'<sup>1</sup> (*sammuti*) term, to denote not a static entity but a dynamic process, like every other *dhamma* 'phenomenon'<sup>2</sup>—human, animal, plant, or otherwise. In answering the question, we shall explore three sources: the Nikāyas, the Abhidhamma, and the works of two commentators, Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (fifth century C.E.) and Kassapa's *Mohavicchedanī* (twelfth century C.E.). While the former is the "oldest non-canonical authority of the Theravāda" (Ñāṇamoli 1956, p. x), the latter represents "the final stage of development of the Theravāda Abhidhamma system in India and Ceylon" (Buddhadatta and Warder 1961, p. xv). No attempt, however, has been made here to explore traditions other than the Theravāda.

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The Traditional View

The most pervasive traditional answer to our question is captured in the *Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, under the entry *hadaya*: "the heart as seat of thought and feeling, esp. strong emotion ... which shows itself in the action of the heart" (Davids and Stede 1979, p. 728). A similar strain of thought runs through another entry under *citta*: "*citta* = *hadaya*, the heart as incorporating man's personality" (p. 266). This view is echoed by modern scholars. Reviewing the literature in his *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, Karunadasa, for example, says that "what is called *hadaya-vatthu* is not absolutely identical with heart as such" (1967, pp. 62 ff.). Yet, in the very next sentence, he says: "like the sense-organs, it is a very subtle and delicate species of matter, and is located inside the heart" (p. 65).

*Commentaries.* Going back in history for an answer to our question, however, we begin with Buddhaghosa, because it is in the *Visuddhimagga* that we seem to find the issue specifically developed, even though, as we shall see, the seeds of the concept can be found earlier. The *Visuddhimagga* clearly posits the mind, the Pāli term used being *mano*, specifically in the heart, in the materiality (*rūpa*) aggregate: *Manodhātu-manoviññādhātūnaṃ-nissayalakkhaṇaṃ hadayavatthu* 'The heart-basis has the characteristic of being the [material] support for the mind-element and for the mind-consciousness element' (chap. XIV, no. 60; Warren 1950, p. 378; Ñāṇamoli 1956, pp. 496–497).<sup>3</sup> The characteristics of the mind are then shown, with its function (*rasa*) being to 'subserve' (*ādhāraṇa*) and the 'manifestation' (*paccupatthāna*) being 'the carrying of them' (*ubbahana*).

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What is interesting, however, is that no 'proximate cause' is offered, the fourth type of characterization given in relation to each of the other items in both the materiality and the mentality aggregates (chap. XIV). But, there is a sentence which seems to suggest such a proximate cause: "it is assisted by the primaries with their function of upholding" (*sandhāraṇādikiccehi bhūtehi katūpakāraṃ*) (chap. XIV, no. 60; N, p. 497; W, p. 379)—primaries being, of course, earthness, wateriness, fireness, and airness. Buddhaghosa further confirms that "it [heart] serves as physical basis for the mind-element and mind-consciousness element, and for the states associated with them" (*manodhātu-manoviññādhātūnañ c'eva taṃsāmpayuttadhammānañ ca vatthubhāvaṃ sādhamānaṃ tiṭṭhati*) (ibid.).

We are now told that it (*hadayavatthu*) is to be found "in dependence of the blood" (*lohitam nissāya*) (ibid.), as in relation to the heart itself elsewhere (in the *anussati-kammaṭṭhānaniddeso* 'description of concentration-on-other-recollections as meditation subjects' [W, pp. 189 ff.; N, pp. 247 ff.]), where it is described in relation to color, shape, direction, location, and delimitation.<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere in the *Visuddhimagga*, the heart-basis is given as an example in explaining a 'prenascence condition' (*pūrejātapaccayo*), a "state that assists by being present, having arisen previously" (*paṭhamataraṃ uppajjitvā vattamānabhāvena upakāraḥ*) (no. 85; N, p. 617; W, p. 457) and a 'conascence condition' (*sahajātapaccayo*), a "state that, while arising, assists [another state] by making it arise together with itself" (*uppajjamāno va saha uppādanabhāvena upakāraḥ dhammo*) (no. 77; N, p. 615; W, p. 455). The heart-basis is further associated with the mind at 'rebirth-linking' (no. 215; N, p. 651) (*paṭisandhiyaṃ*), 'in the course of existence' (no. 130; N, p. 630) (*pavatte*), and 'human death' (no. 163; N, p. 638) (*manussacuti*). Finally, *hadayavatthu* is linked with the three major cognates appearing in the literature: *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa* (see below).

Nothing substantial seems to have changed in the commentarial thinking on the subject between the fifth and the twelfth centuries. Kassapa, in his *Mohavicchedanī*, covers the same ground as Buddhaghosa does, outlining the characteristics of the heart, and linking it to the mind, without again showing a 'proximate cause' (Buddhadatta and Warder 1961, p. 64). The connection between the mind and blood is also made (ibid.) as is the role of the heart at birth, in life, and at death (ibid.; nos. 43, 48, etc.). Continuing the Buddhaghosa tradition, he links the heart with all three terms, *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*, as well.

But Kassapa makes a significant addition to Buddhaghosa. Even though the latter had associated the heart with the mind, he did not specifically name a 'dhamma' in the mentality domain to parallel *hadaya* in the materiality domain. But this Kassapa does, drawing obviously from

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tradition itself, by actually listing *citta* as one of thirty-nine dhammas in the 'mentality domain' (*cittuppādaḅaḅo*) (Buddhadatta and Warder, p. 8), equating it with *viññāḅa* and *manas*. It is now given a description as in the case of *hadayavattu*, the characteristic being shown as 'knowing' (*viḅāḅana*), the function as 'forerunning' (*pubbaḅgama*), the manifestation as 'continuous existence in consciousness' (*nirantarappavattito santāna*), and, unlike in relation to *hadayavatthu*, the proximate cause as 'mentality-materiality' (*nāmarūpa*) (*ibid.*, p. 12). It is as if Kassapa saw a hiatus in Buddhaghosa's systematization and felt compelled to fill it!

Judging by the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Mohavicchedanī*, then, what we find in the commentaries is that the mind, using the term *citta* in particular, is associated, firmly and irrevocably, with the heart.<sup>5</sup>

*The Abhidhamma*. In his notes to *hadayavatthu*, in editing *Abhidhammatḅhasaḅgaha* (see note 5), contemporary Sri Lankan scholar Narada (1968, p. 293) says that "the Buddha refers to the basis of consciousness in such indirect terms as *yaḅ rūpaḅ nissāya* 'depending on that material thing'," a point made by Aung (1910) and Nāḅamoli (pp. 498, 502) as well.

But Narada's quotation, though attributed to the Buddha, is in fact, *not* from the Nikāyas but from the Abhidhamma work, *Paḅḅhāna* (Mrs. Davids 1921), a later systematization. It is said, for example, that the mind-element and the mind-consciousness element sometimes occur as a 'prenascence condition' (as, e.g., in the course of an existence) and sometimes do not (as, e.g., at rebirth linking).<sup>6</sup> And in the explanation of a 'prenascence condition', the 'heart basis' (*hadayavatthu*) is listed as one of eleven *physical* conditions (along with the five physical bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body and objects in the five doors) for the mind-element and mind-consciousness element and for the states associated with it.

Interestingly, however, *hadayavatthu* does not occur in the *Dhammasaḅgaḅī*, the first book of Abhidhamma (nor does it occur in *Atḅhasālinī*, Buddhaghosa's commentary to it). What does occur is *hadaya*, which, unlike in the *Paḅḅhāna*, is equated with the *mind*. In answer to the question, *katamo tasmin samaye viññāḅakkhandho hoti* 'what then constitutes *viññāḅa*?' for example, we see the following statement: *Yaḅ tasmin samaye cittaḅ maḅo māḅasaḅ hadayaḅ paḅḅāraḅ maḅo maḅāyataḅaḅ maḅindriyaḅ viññāḅaḅ viññāḅakkhandho tajaḅ maḅoviññāḅadhātu-ayaḅ tasmin samaye viññāḅakkhandho hoti* (Muller 1885, p. 18). Here *hadaya* 'heart' is equated with, among other things, the three major terms for the mind (*supra*), *citta*, *maḅo*, and *viññāḅa*. As if further evidence were needed, we find the same stock answer repeated for the same question again, replacing *viññāḅa* with *maḅāyatana* and *maḅoviññāḅadhātu* (*ibid.*). In like manner, we find in the *Vibhaḅga* that *hadaya*

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is defined "in a purely mental and not physical sense" (Ñānamoli, p. 498 n. 26), in its definition of mind-element and mind-consciousness element.<sup>7</sup>

Like the Commentaries, then, we find the Abhidhamma making a definite link of the mind with the heart, even though not all the Abhidhamma authors seem to have been sure whether to put it in the mentality domain or the materiality domain, or whether to use *hadaya* or *hadayavatthu!*

*The Nikāyas.* Since both the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries always quote the Nikāyas as their source and authority, we need to look at what evidence we get from the Nikāyas for a link between the mind and the heart. The first of the two dictionary entries quoted in the subsection above gives its source as *Samyutta* I.199. In examining this source, we find the Buddha's chief disciple Ānanda being addressed by "a deva, indigenous to that [Kosalese] forest, moved with compassion [for Ānanda!], desiring his welfare, and wishing to agitate him" (Mrs. Davids 1950, 254); in verse:

*Rukkhamūlagahanam pasakkiya  
nibbānam hadayasmin opiya....* (Feer 1884, p. 198)

meaning, 'Having gone forth to the thicket at the foot of a tree, and having experienced nibbāna in the heart....'<sup>8</sup> Given that none of the classical cognates for the mind (e.g., *citta*, *mano*, or *viññāṇa*) appears in the verse, the association of the mind with the heart can only be made here by extension, understanding that the experiencing of nibbāna is through the mind, or, put another way, that it is the mind that experiences nibbāna. So it is only through a great license as taken by Mrs. Davids (see note 8) that we can agree with the Dictionary entry, "the heart as the seat of thought and feeling."

Elsewhere in the *Samyutta*, there occurs a line where both *citta* and *hadaya* occur: *cittam vā khipeyya hadayam vā phaleyya ...* 'derange the mind or split the heart' (*Samyutta* I.207). While the two clearly have nothing to do with each other here, their occurrence together may be interpreted as suggesting an implicit connection. Even in such an event, the words are not the Buddha's, even though the utterance falls off his lips; he is only *repeating* the words of Suciloma, the Yakkha, who has threaten him: "Friar, I will ask thee a question. If thou answerest me not, I will either derange thy mind or split thy heart" (Mrs. Davids 1950, p. 265).<sup>9</sup> The words that follow, "I will take you by the feet and throw thee over the Ganges," clearly indicate that Suciloma was speaking literally, and in no fancy language.<sup>10</sup>

A similar association between the mind and the heart is contained elsewhere, in the words *hadayam vāssa phaleyya ... cittavikkhepam*



vā ... (*Samyutta* I.125–126). Again, it is the daughters of Mara that are speaking, having tried in vain to seduce the Buddha. The full text makes this clear:

For if we had approached after this fashion any recluse or brahmin who had not extirpated lust, either his heart would be cleft asunder, or hot blood had flowed from his mouth, or he had become crazy, or have lost his mental balance.... (Mrs. Davids 1950, p. 157)<sup>11</sup>

So it is not the Buddha that is speaking!

As can be seen, then, the only three references in the *Samyutta* that seem to suggest an association between the mind and the heart are contained in the “Sagātha” section, dealing as they do “with legends, fairies, gods and devils, with royal and priestly interviewers of the sublime teacher” (*ibid.*, p. vi), or of his disciples. So the only evidence we have from the *Samyutta* comes not through the words of the Buddha but from unenlightened *puthujjanas* ‘average people’, or rather *puthussattas* ‘average beings’—to coin a term that includes humans, *yakkhas*, and *devas*!

What the *Nikāyas* then encourage us to conclude is that whatever else the Buddha may or may not have understood as the seat of consciousness (see discussion below), it certainly wasn’t the heart. In fact, the only sense in which the term *hadaya* occurs in the *Nikāyas* is in the sense of an *organ*, as, for example, the eleventh part of the body in a list of thirty-two upon which to meditate<sup>12</sup>—this in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Taylor 1905, vol. 1, p. 6), a book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.<sup>13</sup> The term *hadayavatthu*, which appears in the *Abhidhamma* and the Commentarial literature with roughly the same semantic distribution as *hadaya*, never once appears in the *Nikāyas*!

*Discussion.* Given that the Buddha himself has not linked the mind to the heart, or at least not made a statement to that effect, what is readily evident is that the localization of the mind in the heart seems to have taken root among the ranks of the Buddha’s discipleship during the time of the systematization of the *Abhidhamma*. But during this stage, the conceptualization still seems fluid: sometimes not appearing at all, as, for example, in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, where it appears sometimes as *hadaya* alone, sometimes as *hadayavatthu*, and sometimes with one or the other appearing in either of or both the material and the mentality domains. The fact that the term does not appear in the *Atthasālinī*, Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, in which he sought to be authentic to tradition, provides further evidence of the ambivalence during this early period.

Since, however, we find such fluidity giving way to solidity by Buddhaghosa’s time (fifth century C.E.), it may encourage one to view the entrenchment as a result of a boldness on the part of Buddhaghosa, given

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that, as Nāṇamoli points out, he did not hesitate to take liberties in his creative work, the *Visuddhimagga*, as he was equally careful to be true to tradition in his other works (e.g., the *Atthasālinī*). But we cannot ignore the words of Mrs. Rhys Davids: "Of his [Buddhaghosa's] talent there can be no doubt. . . . But of originality, of independent thought, there is at present no evidence" (Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 2, p. 887; quoted in Adikaram 1946, p. 4). Further, in none of the relevant sections in the *Visuddhimagga* that refer to *hadayavatthu* or *hadaya* for the first time (XIII.99 and VII.111, respectively) or deal with them extensively (XIV.60, VIII.111), do we have Buddhaghosa making the claim *ayaṃ pana me attano mati* 'this indeed is my own view', as seen, for example, in the *Papañcasūdanī* (see Adikaram, p. 3, for the reference).

Now we come to the possibility that Buddhaghosa was simply following tradition. There is much evidence to support this. Buddhaghosa's task "was not to write a series of original books on Buddhism but to put into Pali in a coherent and intelligent form the matter that already existed in the various Sinhalese Commentaries" (Adikaram, p. 2). His description of his own methodology in the *Samantapāsādikā* (Introduction) bears witness to this:

In commencing this commentary—having embodied therein the *Mahā Aṭṭhakathā*, without excluding any proper meaning from the decisions contained in the *Mahāpaccarī*, as also in the famous *Kurundī* and other commentaries, and including the opinions of the Elders. . . . From these commentaries, after casting off the language, condensing detailed accounts, including authoritative decisions, without overstepping any Pāli idiom. . . . (quoted in Adikaram, p. 2)

If Buddhaghosa is thus being authentic to tradition, it can be reasonably assumed that the notion of *hadayavatthu* as the seat of consciousness was already in the Sinhalese commentaries as well (in addition to the *Abhidhamma*). Since the *Visuddhimagga* was the "test" by which Buddhaghosa was judged by the Sinhalese Elders to be allowed to translate the commentaries into Pāli, it cannot but be the case that he had to be accurate in his understanding and analysis of so central a concept as the *dharmas*. It is indeed entirely possible as well that Buddhaghosa noted the presence of the noncanonical material in the Sinhalese commentaries, but, as Adikaram points out (p. 4), his task was "not to rectify," particularly given his lack of originality (*supra*) and the striving for authenticity to scripture. There are, of course, unfortunately no Sinhalese commentaries to check out this claim.

So if we assume a role for Buddhaghosa, the authors of Sinhalese commentaries, and the authors of the *Abhidhamma* in the evolving localization of the mind in the heart, they all seemed to have had a fur-

ther source—ironically, the Nikāyas themselves—and this, as we shall see, almost by default!

Writing the words, “The heart-basis ... the support for the mind-element and for the mindconsciousness-element,” Buddhaghosa asks, “How is that to be known?” He answers, “[1] From scriptures and [2] from logical reasoning” (no. 60; N, pp. 497–498 n. 26). He then goes on to quote the *Paṭṭhāna* (I.10, as above)<sup>14</sup> as his evidence. But why is it not (as noted above) in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (the first book of the Abhidhamma), he asks, if it is in the *Paṭṭhāna*? Buddhaghosa explains that the reason is the “non-inconsistency of the teaching,” to ensure “unity” (ibid.).<sup>15</sup>

What seems ironic is that even though he seeks to make the Buddha’s teaching consistent, it is the very inconsistency in the Nikāyas<sup>16</sup> (and presumably of the Buddha himself?)<sup>17</sup> that has led to the inconsistency between the Nikāyas and the later works on the issue of the localization of the mind!

It is evident, for example, that more than one term has been used by the Buddha to denote the concept of consciousness, along with its associated states. The three principal ones are *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*, as contained, for example, in the classic statement, *cittaṃ iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇaṃ* (*Samyutta* II.95), or in *yañ ca vuccati cittaṃ vā mano ti vā viññāṇaṃ ti vā* (*Dīgha* I.21). It is “as if to say, choose which you will” (Mrs. Rhys Davids 1936, p. 237)!<sup>18</sup>

Each term, further, has variant renderings: *citta* as *ceto*, *cetanā*, *ceta-yita* (ibid., p. 239), and even *cetasika*; *mano* as *manindriya*, *manodhātu*, *manāyatana*, *manoviññāṇa*, *manoviññāṇadhātu*, and so on; and *viññāṇa* as *viññāṇadhātu*, *cakkhu-*, *sota-*, *ghāna-*, *jivhā-*, *kāya-*, *mano-viññāṇa*, and so on (see Davids and Stede 1979 for the entries). This, of course, is not to mention *nāma* ‘mentality’, as in *nāmarūpa* ‘psychophysique’ (this being my translation of the term, in Sugunasiri 1978).

Again, grammatically speaking, of the three terms, *citta* alone appears in the plural (though only “3 of 150 times in the Nikāyas” [Davids and Stede, p. 266]), while *mano* and *viññāṇa* never do.

The apparent semantic inconsistency of the three major terms seems to complicate matters further. If, as we have seen in the *Samyutta* and the *Dīgha* statements above, that the terms are used synonymously, they are also used with different shades of meaning. “*Mano* represents the intellectual functioning of consciousness, while *viññāṇa* represents the field of sense and sense-reaction (‘perception’), and *citta* the subjective aspect of consciousness” (Davids and Stede, p. 520). Or “In *mano* we have the man valuing, measuring, appraising, and also purposing, intending.... In *citta*, we more usually have the man as affective and affected, as experiencing. In *viññāṇa*, we have the man as not of this world only” (Mrs. Rhys Davids 1936, p. 237).

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Further, while *citta* means "inquisitiveness, instability, impulsiveness" (combining the intellectual and the affective), or "thinking or thought" (intellectual), it is on the one hand contrasted with *kāya* 'body' (as, e.g., in the series, *cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāna*, *jivhā*, *kāya*, and *mano*), and on the other hand with *rūpa* 'matter' (ibid., p. 239). It is also both compared and contrasted with 'will' (Davids and Stede, p. 267). *Mano* is, again, used with "prefixes of sentiment," as, for example, in *sumana* and *dummana* (ibid., p. 238), but not *citta*.

Given the sometimes overlapping, sometimes complementary usage, it now seems a simple step for Buddhaghosa, the Sinhalese commentators, or the Ābhidhammikas to extend the association of *nibbāna* to the heart in the *Samyutta* (*supra*), made by a deva, first, to all three terms, *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*, and second, to put it in the mouth of the Buddha! Not even the fact that the connection was being made in the other two contexts in the *Samyutta* by a yakkha and Mara's daughters seems to have entered anybody's mind!<sup>19</sup>

If, then, inconsistency in the Nikāyas served as one condition for the view to prevail that the mind was located in the heart, it is equally likely that the notion was influenced by an external source as well: the Upaniṣads. For one thing, at least some of the Upaniṣads (other than the earliest five)<sup>20</sup> were not much older in time, some in fact being written afterwards.<sup>21</sup> For another, at least some of the Sinhalese elders who wrote down the first Commentaries, if not Buddhaghosa himself,<sup>22</sup> were "conversant with the Sanskrit language" (Adikaram, p. 4).<sup>23</sup>

What, then, is this Upaniṣadic view? The Sanskrit term *jīva(h)*, which means 'life' (Monier-Williams 1957, p. 452), literally means 'that which breathes', from the root *jiv* 'to breathe'. According to the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *ātman* 'soul' is based on the *prāṇa* 'life-breath', also called 'in-breath' (Radhakrishnan 1953).<sup>24</sup> Death, too, is associated with breathing, in both the physical and the nonphysical senses.<sup>25</sup>

If breath is associated with 'soul' and 'death' in the Upaniṣads, we also find it associated with the heart as well, in life and at death. In sleep, for example, "When this being fell asleep . . . then [he] rests in that place • which is the space within the heart" (*yatraiṣa etat supto'bhūt . . . ya eso'ntar-hṛdaya ākāśaḥ tasmīṅ chete*) (BU II.1.17; R, p. 189). At death, "the point of his heart becomes lighted up and by that light the self departs" (*tasya haitasya hṛdayasyāgraṃ pradyotate, tena pradyotenaiṣa ātmā niṣkrāmati*) (BU IV.4.2; R, p. 270).

Nor is that all. *Jīva*, which, as we have seen, referred originally to the biological aspect of human nature throughout one's life (awake, in a dream state, or asleep), has a cognate, *puruṣa*, meaning 'man' (both gender-neutral and male). But the term has a literal sense as well, namely *puri-śāya* 'that which dwells in the citadel of heart' (R, p. 90). In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* of several centuries later, we in fact find the soul (or self)

directly linked with the heart: *ātmāsya jantor nihito guhāyaṃ* 'the self is set in the heart of every creature' (KU I.2.20; R, p. 617). If in the later *Kaṭha* this secret place is "the chief seat of the Supreme" (*guhām ... parame parārdhe*) (KU I.3.1; R, p. 621), in the earlier *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, Brahman itself comes to be equated with the heart: *eṣa prajā-patir yad hṛdayam, etad brahma* 'This is Prajā-pati [literally, 'Lord of People'] [the same as] this heart. It is Brahman' (BU V.3.1; R, p. 291). When the line continues with the words *etat sarvaṃ. tad etat try-akṣaram; hṛ-da-yam iti* 'It is all. It has three syllables, *hṛ, da, yam ...*', we find even a ritual quality accorded the heart.<sup>26</sup>

If the understanding of the heart that we get from what is given above is captured in the *Chāndogya* phrase *ātmā hṛdi* 'the self is in the heart' (CU VIII.3.3; R, p. 496), the Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa captures its extended concept in the phrase *prāṇo brahmeti* 'the breathing [living] spirit is Brahman' (II.1; R, p. 761).

But what about the heart as the seat of the 'mind'? For this we have to turn to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, where we find a specific reference to two cognates of the mind, *mano* and *citta*, captured in the parallel phrases *mano brahmeti* 'mind as Brahman' (CU III.18.1; R, p. 397) and *cittam brahmeti* 'thought as Brahman' (CU VII.5.3; R, pp. 474-475).

So we find in the Upaniṣads, both early and late, the mind associated with the heart, definitively and irrevocably. But how is the heart itself described in terms of its physical make-up? Here is the *Chāndogya* description: *atha yad idam asmin brahmapure daharaṃ puṇḍarīkaṃ veśma, daharo'sminn antarākāśaḥ. ...* 'Now, here in this city of Brahman is an abode, a small lotus flower; within it is a small place' (CU VIII.1.1; R, p. 491). The term *hṛdaya* itself occurs two verses later: *yāvān vā ayam ākāśaḥ, tāvān eṣo'ntarhṛdaya ākāśaḥ. ...* 'as far, verily, as this [world] space extends, so far extends the space within the heart' (CU VIII.1.3; R, p. 492).<sup>27</sup>

It may now be instructive to recall that the heart was characterized in the *Visuddhimagga* (see above), too, in terms of a lotus, in relation to both its shape and color. And, reminiscent of *ākāśa* in the Upaniṣads, Buddhaghosa writes, "Inside it there is a hollow," too (see note 4).

No doubt the much more detailed characterization of the heart in the *Visuddhimagga* speaks to the creative genius of Buddhaghosa that Nāṇamoli (*supra*) talks about. But the parallel between the specific characterization of the heart in relation to the lotus and the placing of 'the mind-element and the mind-consciousness element' in the blood that is in the hollow of the heart are too close to be dismissed as being merely coincidental or accidental. The inevitable conclusion, then, has to be that the origin of the view of the seat of consciousness as being in the heart is at least partly Upaniṣadic.

Now it may be ironic that the early disciples of the Buddha would Suwanda H.J. Sugun:

want to accept something from Vedism out of a critique of which Buddhism arose. But, of course, it needs to be remembered that the Buddha himself had continued to use some of the Vedic terminology (e.g., *nāmarūpa*, *viññāna*, *manas*, *citta*, etc.; see Mrs. Rhys Davids 1936, chap. 10, for a discussion), though with changed meaning, and had *not* categorically rejected the mind-heart association as he had, for example, the caste system, or the existence of a soul. There is the possibility, further, that Vedism would have been in the country (Lanka) prior to the advent of Buddhism, making it no alien thought to the educated Sinhalese. So it may be conjectured, in the absence of a better alternative, that the disciples hung on to what was helping to make the intellectual circles at the time. There was, after all, no reason to think that the Brahminical tradition was wrong in everything!

On the basis of the discussion above, then, we must conclude that in associating the mind (using whatever term) with the heart—basing oneself in the Upaniṣads (and the Vedas) or the Nikāyas—Buddhaghosa, the Sinhalese commentators, and the Ābhidhammikas all erred!

#### The Buddha's View as Reconstructed from the Nikāyas

Having outlined the possible reasons for the erroneous localization of the mind in the heart during the post-Buddhian period, we are still left with the task of identifying what the Buddha's view indeed was on the matter. Did he in fact simply "not commit himself" to a particular view, as Narada (*supra* p. 199) claims:

It was [the] cardiac theory [the view that the heart is the seat of consciousness] that prevailed in the Buddha's time. . . . The Buddha could have adopted this popular theory, but He did not commit Himself.

Was he being silent on the matter, as Aung argues?

On a surface level, the answer to both questions has to be in the affirmative, for the issue does not seem to have warranted his attention qua issue.<sup>28</sup> We find no elucidation of it in the discourses where one should legitimately expect one, namely in the *Mahānidāna Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 15), one of two suttas mentioned by name at the First Council (the other being the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*) and thus likely to be among the oldest and most reflective of the Buddha's own teachings,<sup>29</sup> or in the *Mahāpādāna Sutta* (*Dīgha* 14) (see Warder 1970, pp. 107–117 for a discussion).

The absence of a specific answer to our question in the Nikāyas is on the one hand understandable, since from the Buddha's point of view, all he was doing was refraining from answering abstract, philosophical, or psychological questions merely for the sake of answering them, and seeking rather to help human beings achieve liberation from *saṃsāra*. Not that he did not have any complex explanations; but he would offer these only to the extent that they were relevant to the liberative process.

But it is precisely for this reason that the lack of an answer is difficult to understand—because of the singularly important position held by the concept of consciousness in his teachings.

Such an absence may also suggest that the Buddha was specifically seeking to avoid answering a ‘wrong’ question of the type “What would the hair color of an offspring of a barren woman be?”—knowing fully well that any answer given would be wrong! Thus, for example, talking about a ‘seat’ could suggest (a) a permanence or tangibility where none exists, or (b) a linear causality that contradicts the reality of relationality (reciprocal, circular, and multicausal) as contained in the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, a fundamental pillar of his teaching.

Despite the absence of a definitive answer to our question *in our terms*, I want to argue that the Buddha did indeed identify ‘the seat of consciousness’ without calling it such, however, and that the evidence is right there in the Nikāyas, waiting to be discovered and continuing to appear in the Abhidhamma, the Commentaries from the *Visuddhimagga* to the *Mohavicchedanī*, and in all the Buddhist writings of all schools to date.

In our explorations for a home for consciousness, we can find the teacher talking to Ānanda, explaining to him his teaching of *paṭiccasamuppāda* ‘Conditioned Origination’ (*Mahānidāna Sutta*). In explaining the cycle of causation, the Buddha comes to the words *viññānapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ* ‘conditioned by consciousness is the psychophysique’. Then he summarizes the sequence backwards, *nāmarūpapaccayā viññānaṃ*, showing the reciprocal relationship between the two, a point in fact made by Sāriputta, too, to a learned Brahmin Kotthita (*Samyutta* II.80).

The Buddha continues his explanation to Ānanda: “If consciousness did not descend into the mother’s womb there would be no formation (‘coagulation’, *sam-murcch*) of a sentient body in the mother’s womb. Or, if, after descending into the womb, consciousness were to pass away, the sentient body would not be produced for this world” (Warder, p. 110).

Since the *Mahanidāna Sutta* is one of two discourses mentioned by name at the First Council, and the fact that it is also shared by other schools (Warder, p. 108),<sup>30</sup> we can assume that this was, if not actually the Buddha’s very own thinking, the closest we can get to it.

The *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (*supra*) speaks to the same reciprocal relationship: “this consciousness turns back again from the sentient body. It goes no further. To this extent one may be born, grow old, die and be reborn, namely [to the extent that] consciousness exists through the condition of a sentient body, a sentient body through the condition of consciousness” (*ibid.*, p. 117).

A further addition is significant; it makes conditioned origination

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“the content of a Buddha’s Enlightenment” (ibid., p. 116). Given that the Buddha (our’s or any other, since all Buddhas are supposed to have similar paths to Enlightenment) would not be born again, the suggested reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* holds not only in the rebirth process but even in the process of a given lifetime, a point made by Buddhaghosa, too (*supra*).

There are, of course, many other places where the sequence showing the reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* occurs throughout the Nikāyas. But of specific relevance is another *Dīgha* text (III.211), repeated in the *Saṃyutta* and also found in the Chinese tradition (Warder, p. 118), where *viññāṇa* is shown as one of four ‘foods’ (*āhāra*): “All beings (*sattvas*) persist through food” (ibid). Elsewhere (*Dīgha* III.247; *M* III.31, 247), *viññāṇa* occurs as one of six *dhātus* ‘bases’, along with the four elements (*āpo, tejo, vāyo, paṭhavī*), and space (*ākāsa*), suggesting even a material quality.

As the evidence above indicates, the view in the Nikāyas is that the mind, instead of being localized in a single organ, is, rather, *non*-localized, that is, spread throughout, or is coterminous with, the *whole* of *nāmarūpa*. This, captured also, incidentally, by Kassapa in his *Mohavicchedanī* (*supra*), is confirmed from another function of *viññāṇa*—as the ‘coordinator’ of the senses. Such coordination may be aspectual (‘localized’ if you like) in relation to each of the *cakkhu-, sota-, ghāna-*, and *jivhā-viññāṇas* when the data (*ārammaṇa*) is input through the eye, ear, nose, and tongue, respectively. But in the case of *kāya* of this same series, meaning the rest of the body other than the eye, ear, nose, and tongue,<sup>31</sup> it is evident that *viññāṇa*, by definition, is in the whole body and not in any one particular locale.

The same is the case when it comes to the mind as *sense* (in the series *cakkhu-, sota-, ghāna-, jivhā-, kāya-,* and *mano-viññāṇa*); it is logical to conclude that the mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) is not ‘localized’ in any one part of the body as in the case of the other four—*cakkhu, sota, ghāna,* and *jivhā*.

If, indeed, in the Buddha’s mind, consciousness was localized in the heart even as, for example, in the eye and ear, one would expect to see him use a term such as *\*hadaya-viññāṇa*<sup>32</sup> to capture the notion, giving Buddhaghosa his fare. But, of course, no such term occurs anywhere in the Nikāya literature.

In answer to our question, I can now hear the Buddha speaking to us as follows: “While there is no ‘seat’ as such of consciousness, as an unchanging entity, or as a ‘first cause’, there is a *process* in the mental domain that coarises with the process of the totality of the physical domain.” Indeed, there are two terms in the Nikāyas that we can point to as having precisely these functions in the respective domains. They are *jīvita* ‘life’ and *jīvitindriya* ‘life faculty’. Of the two, *jīvita* appears in the

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Nikāyas extensively (V II.191; S I.42, IV.169, 213; M II.173; A I.155; etc.), but unlike the case of *hadaya/hadayavattu*, the extended term *jīvitindriya* also occurs at least twice (V III.73; S V.204).<sup>33</sup> Both also occur in the context of 'depriving' (*jīvitam voropeti*) or 'destruction' (*jīvitam upacchindati*).

The most fundamental justification for our reconstruction, then, is that unlike *hadayavattu*, *jīvitindriya* is authentic to the tradition, and not a later concoction of the Ābhidharmikas or Porāṇāchāriyas or Buddhaghosa, even though it certainly received further elucidation at their hands.

Though not understood as we have used them here, what is of interest is that we find the two terms (and concepts) appearing in the *Visuddhimagga*, too—*jīvita* as the seventh of twenty seven 'constant states' associated with the first sense-sphere of (profitable) consciousness (chap. XIV; 133 [395]) and *jīvitindriya*, its corollary, as a 'derived materiality' (*upādāya rūpa*) (chap. XIV; 36 [375]). In outlining the features of *jīvita*, Buddhaghosa says, for example: *lakkhaṇādīni pan'assa rūpajīvite vuttanayen'eva veditabbāni. Tan hi rūpadhammānaṃ jīvitam, idaṃ arūpadhammānaṃ ti idam ev'ettha nānākāraṇaṃ* 'its characteristics, etc. should be understood in the way stated under material life. For that is life of material things and this is life of immaterial things. This is the only difference here' (no. 138; W, p. 392; N, p. 523). The fourfold description of *jīvitindriya* is given as follows: *Sahajarūpānupālanalakkhaṇaṃ jīvitindriyam, tesan pavattanarasam, tesam yeva thapanapaccupatthānaṃ, yāpayitabbabhūtapadaṭṭhānaṃ* 'The life faculty has the characteristic of maintaining consascent kinds of matter. Its function is to make them occur. It is manifested in the establishing of their presence. Its proximate cause is primary elements that are to be sustained' (no. 59; W, p. 378; N, p. 496).

Further, in rebirth-linking (*paṭisandhiyam*) as well as in the course of an existence (*pavatte*), the 'material life [faculty]' (*rūpajīvitam*) is a condition (in three ways: as presence, nondisappearance, and faculty (*atthiavigata-indriyavasena ... tidhā*) (chap. XVII, 217). But what about at death? Here is Buddhaghosa's explanation:

It [i.e., *jīvitindriya*] does not prolong presence at the moment of dissolution because it is itself dissolving, like the flame of a lamp when the wick and the oil are getting used up. But it must not be regarded as destitute of power, to maintain, make occur, and make present, because it does accomplish each of these functions at the moment stated." (No. 59; N, p. 496)<sup>34</sup>

Elsewhere, *jīvitindriya* is characterized as being one of eleven components that make up materiality, the others being the four primaries and the six physical bases (chap. XVII, no. 204). Noteworthy is the fact that *hadayavattu* is not included here. Further, while 'life faculty' is listed by

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Buddhaghosa as an *indriya* 'faculty/organ' (i.e., *jīvitindriya*) [chap. XVI, no. 1]), the 'heart-base' is not,<sup>35</sup> with no such term as *\*hadayavatthvindrīya* appearing anywhere in the *Visuddhimagga*, just as it appears nowhere else in the canonical literature either!<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Buddhaghosa seems to recognize the primacy of the life-faculty over the heart-basis when he says that the latter "is maintained by life" (*āyunā anupāliyamānaṃ*) (chap. XIV, no. 60).

If, then, 'life faculty' (1) is an *indriya*, (2) has, as is to be expected for an *indriya*, the primary elements as the 'proximate cause', (3) is a condition for rebirth, (4) is not destitute of power for continuing life, and (5) dissolves at death, it is immediately evident that it is coextensive with the whole psychophysique. This conclusion is further confirmed by its being listed (chap. XIV, no. 1) along with *itthindriya* 'femininity faculty' and *purisindriya* 'masculinity faculty', both of which, of course, must be understood as being coextensive with the whole body.

This indeed is what we found the Buddha telling us in the Nikāyas: the reciprocal relationship between *nāmarūpa* and *viññāṇa* (*supra*). In the lamp/wick analogy above, one is reminded of the characterization of *viññāṇa* in relation to *nāmarūpa* elsewhere: "A state that, while arising, assists [another state] by making it arise together with itself [as] a co-nascence condition, as a lamp is for illumination" (no. 77; Nāṇamoli, p. 614). It is thus that Sāriputta talks of the two as reeds supporting each other.

As would be evident from our discussion, then, it can be established, with seeming authority from the Buddha and even the later tradition, that *jīvitindriya* can lay a more legitimate claim as the 'seat of consciousness' in the materiality domain. This, interestingly enough, was a possibility considered by the author of *Visuddhimagga Atthakathā*, but passed up in favor of *hadayavatthu* on the flimsiest of arguments, and without any evidential base! To quote: "And in the case of the life faculty, that would have to have another function, so to make it the support would be illogical, too" (Nāṇamoli, p. 497 n. 26). But why it must have "another function" or what this function would be is never explained. Nor is it explained why it is illogical!<sup>37</sup> But he concludes: "So it is the heart-basis that remains to be recognized as their support" (*ibid.*)! The author certainly seems to have been eager to be faithful to Buddhaghosa, or perhaps trying to cover up, or justify, an error!

Now *jīvitindriya*, though in the 'materiality' domain, needs to be understood as a *process* like *citta* and not *hadaya*. *Jīvita*, also a process, listed as a *dhamma*, both *kusala* 'moral' and *akusala* 'immoral'—and presumably *avyākata* 'indeterminate', too—and thus present in *all* the states of mind, would be its legitimate sibling in the mentality domain. *Jīvita* and *jīvitindriya* are, then, both coextensive with the whole body, and with each other.

## Concluding Remarks

If our analysis is correct, then we must see the identification of the heart-base as the seat of consciousness during the post-Buddhian period as a gross misrepresentation of the Buddha, in violation of the Buddha's advice not to be led by "tradition" or "the authority of religious texts" (*Kālāma Sutta*). The tradition here for the Sinhalese Porāṇācariyas appears to be Brahminism and the associated worldview, with the Vedas, Purānas, Āgamas, and Upaniṣads collectively being the texts. For Buddhaghosa, Kassapa, and all others later, the Sinhalese Porāṇācariyas and their Aṭṭhakathās (see Adikaram 1946 for an overview) serve as tradition and text, respectively. What we then have, it appears, is an example of how the violation of a scholarly principle of objectivity, as called for by the Buddha, can blind an inquirer to the obvious. For after all, as we have seen, the reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* is no stranger to the Ābhidhammikas, Porāṇācariyas, or Buddhaghosa, since it appears in their own analyses. Yet they slide over it as if it was irrelevant to the question at hand!<sup>38</sup>

While a comprehensive treatment of the epistemological and pragmatic implications of our new understanding is beyond the scope of this essay, we may suggest some productive lines of comparative inquiry. An obvious one would be our current scientific understanding of the nature of the mind. Writing in *Psychology Today*, John (1976) pointed out, for example, how the mind is extended throughout the body, through its neuroskeletal system. Chopra (1989), "exploring the frontiers of mind-body medicine" in his *Quantum Healing*, refers to a 'thinking body', positing the mind ('intelligence') in the whole body.<sup>39</sup> Buddha's own understanding, of course, goes beyond John's neuroskeletal system to the very boundaries—skin, hair, nails, and teeth, included as part of the thirty-two body parts (*supra*). Putting the Buddha's understanding in terms of contemporary terminology, should we say that the mind is in every one of over several trillion cells in each one of us, residing in each DNA molecule and in instantaneous communication with every other DNA molecule, with research assigning this function of communication to 'neuropeptides' or "information molecules" (see note 39)? Since the blueprint for every subsequent DNA molecule is provided by the very first DNA molecule that comes into existence at the point of conception, before the embryo starts dividing up the second day or begins to make a nervous system on day eighteen (Chopra 1989), it is obvious that the mind must then be in the very first DNA molecule as well. That is to say, it is *precortical*. Isn't this, then, what the Buddha says when he posits a reciprocal relationship between *nāmarūpa* and *viññāṇa*?

There is another related line of inquiry. In maintaining that the heart is not the seat of consciousness, the Buddha obviously joins contemporary medicine in rejecting cardiac arrest as constituting (clinical) death.

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But whether the current medical understanding that "brain death" constitutes death matches with the Buddha's understanding can only be determined through an examination of the concept of *cuti-citta* 'exit consciousness' and associated teachings. For a start, it may be noted that, as mentioned in this section, the mind exists from day (i.e., moment) one, eighteen days *before* the neuronal system evolves. Would it not then make sense to consider the theoretical possibility that consciousness (another term for mind) could still be present *after* 'brain death', for however brief a moment, even though we may not have instruments sophisticated enough to measure it?

On a more pragmatic level, one of the obvious concerns relates to organ transplantation (see Sugunasiri 1990). For example, if the seat of consciousness is not the heart, would it be easier for Tibetan Buddhists, for example, to emulate the Bodhisattva ideal of donating organs (*Jātakas*) without being troubled by their traditional understanding that a dead body should not be moved for seven days, since life continues in the *heart* for that long? This, however, is not to say that life does not indeed continue to exist in the whole body, "postcortically" as we have suggested, after being declared clinically dead. If so, what are the implications for the treatment of cadavers, autopsies, burials, cremations, and so on—or, indeed, for Buddhist postdeath customs of transferring merit and offering alms at the end of three, seven, or thirty days, at the end of the first year, and so on?

## NOTES

My thanks go to Professors A. K. Warder and Leonard Priestley of the University of Toronto for comments on an earlier version of this essay, and to the anonymous reviewers for their critical evaluation.

- 1 – This is Warder's (1970, p. 150) translation of the Sanskrit term, *saṃvṛti* (Pāli *sammuti*), and I use it here since it captures best the notion I am seeking to convey.
- 2 – The term *dharmā* has different meanings (see Watanabe 1983, chap. 2, for a discussion). Thus it will be rendered differently elsewhere in this essay, and sometimes it will be retained without translation.
- 3 – Unless otherwise indicated, the references to the *Visuddhimagga* in this discussion are to Warren 1950 (cited as "W") when in Pāli and to Nāṇamoli 1952 (cited as "N") when in translation.

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- 4 – The full description here is as follows:

This is the heart flesh. As to *colour*, it is the colour of the back of a red-lotus petal. As to *shape*, it is the shape of a lotus bud with the outer petals, removed and turned upside down; it is smooth outside, and inside it is like the interior of a *kosātakī* (loofah gourd). In those who possess understanding it is a little expanded; in those without understanding it is still only a bud. Inside it, there is a hollow the size of a *punnāga* seed's bed where half a *pasata* measure of blood is kept, with which as their support the mind element and mind-consciousness element occur. That in one of greedy temperament is red; that in one of hating temperament is black; that in one of deluded temperament is like the water that meat has been washed in; that in one of speculative temperament is like lentil soup in colour; that in one of faithful temperament is the colour of (yellow) *kaṇikāra* flowers; that in one of understanding temperament is limpid, clear, unturbid, bright, pure, like a washed gem of pure water, and it seems to shine. As to *direction*, it lies in the upper direction. As to *location*, it is to be found in the middle between the two breasts, inside the body. As to *delimitation*, it is bounded by what appertains to heart. (Ñāṇamoli, p. 275)

See Warren 1950, p. 211, for the Pāli version.

- 5 – See Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* (Narada 1968), for a similar view.
- 6 – The relevant quotation in full is as follows: *Yaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññādhātu ca vattanti, taṃ rūpaṃ manodhātuyā taṃsampayuttakānaṃ ca dhammānaṃ pūrejātapaccayena paccayo; manoviññādhātuyā taṃsampayuttakānaṃ ca dhammānaṃ kañci kālaṃ pūrejāta ... kañci kālaṃ na pūrejātapaccayena paccayo* (Mrs. Davids 1921, p. 5; quoted, with minor variations, in Warren, p. 457) 'The materiality with which as their support the mind element and mind-consciousness element occur is a condition, and it is sometimes [as in the course of an existence] a condition, as pre-nascence condition, sometimes [as at rebirth-linking] not a condition as pre-nascence condition, for the mind-consciousness element and for the states associated therewith' (no. 85; Ñāṇamoli 1956, p. 617).
- 7 – ... *hadayaṃ paṇḍāraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññānaṃ viññānakhando tājā manodhātu* (Mrs. Davids 1904, p. 88).
- 8 – This is my literal translation. Mrs. Davids' rendering of it (1950, p. 254), "Thou who hast plunged in leafy lair of trees / Suffering nibbāna in thy heart to sink," is certainly more poetic, but is clearly a free translation. It is thanks to her great license as well that, as we shall see, the misleading entry has found its way into the PTS dictionary (p. 728, under *hadaya*) in the following words: "the heart as seat of thought and feeling, esp. of strong emotion (as in Vedas!) which shows itself in the action of the heart."

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- 9 – Here Mrs. Davids, basing herself on Commentarial authority, states in a footnote: “Either by making an appalling sight of himself before the Buddha, or by uttering fearful sounds” (p. 265). 19 –
- 10 – The Buddha’s words in full in this section are as follows: *Na khvāhaṃ taṃ āvuso passāmi sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sasamaṇa-brahmaniyā pajāya so devamanussāya yo me cittaṃ vā khipeyya hadayaṃ vā phaleyya padesu vā gahetvā paragaṅgāya khipeyya. api ca tvam āvuso puccha yad akankhāsi ti* (*Samyutta* I. 207). “I see no one, friend, in the whole world, be he Mara or Brahma, nor among gods or men with all the recluses and the brahmins, who is able to derange my mind, or split my heart, or take me by the feet and throw me over the Ganges; nevertheless, friend, ask according to thy desire” (Mrs. Davids 1950, p. 265). 20 –
- 11 – Even if we were to understand the two threats here as clearly referring to the physical and the mental, respectively, the association made is evident. 21 –
- 12 – It is possible that this list was arrived at by the Buddha through personal observation of his own mindbody through meditation, and/or by reference to the Indian medical texts of the time. 22 –
- 13 – It may be noted here that the material of this later work, as Warder points out (p. 203), is of “doubtful authenticity” as well. 23 –
- 14 – Even though Nāṇamoli gives the reference as I.4, it should, in fact, be I.10. Incidentally, the reference on the next page (p. 498) to the *Paṭisambhidā* should be I.6 and not I.7 as given. 24 –
- 15 – See Nāṇamoli, p. 497, for Buddhaghosa’s complex argument, which need not detain us here. 25 –
- 16 – “Let the reader not expect to find a thorough-going consistency in the Suttas” (Mrs. Davids 1936, p. 235). 26 –
- 17 – The apparent inconsistent usage by the Buddha need not mean that he was unsure of himself, given the extremely comprehensive ways in which he has explained complex phenomena (e.g., *nāmarūpa*, *paṭiccasamuppāda*). It may rather be that he used the concepts and terms that best befitted the task at hand, the type of listener (from the wise to the ignorant), the context (a congregation of his disciples vs. the battlefield, in which he advised kings), etc. In this connection, it is worthy to note, e.g., how we, too, in contemporary times, use terms such as *mind*, *thought*, and *consciousness* with both semantic overlap and mutual exclusivity. 27 –
- 18 – But see later in the third section below for another synonym used by the Buddha that is more relevant to the case being made. 28 –

- 19 – I have, of course, not checked out every reference to *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa* in a reference work like the Pali Concordance. Such a task, well beyond the needs of this essay, might indeed be a fruitful endeavor for someone who wishes to pursue the matter.
- 20 – Warder (p. 23) determines that the *Chāndogya*, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, *Aitareya*, *Kauṣītakī*, and *Taittirīya* Upaniṣads “alone are strictly canonical Veda.”
- 21 – Evidence for this is that some of the Upaniṣads themselves were influenced by Buddhist teachings. For example, we find that the later Upaniṣads “dispense with supernatural gods or a God and explain the universe out of itself” (Warder, p. 32).
- 22 – Even though Buddhaghosa himself “nowhere shows his knowledge of Upanishads” (Law 1946, p. 33), the *Buddhaghosuppatti* records a tradition of Buddhaghosa’s knowledge of Sanskrit being tested on the eve of his departure from Sri Lanka (back to his homeland in India). It even preserves a specimen of the Sanskrit verses he was able to compose impromptu (ibid. p. 41).
- 23 – Buddhaghosa, e.g., tells us that a certain Vaṅgīsa and Punna, disciples of the Buddha of his time, were born of Brahmin parents, and that at least the former was versed in the three Vedas (Law, p. 97). Many from this same background and persuasion engaged the Buddha in dialogue as well, as challengers or inquirers, Vaṅgīsa and Punna being examples of those who eventually came under his tutelage.
- 24 – *kasmin nu tvañ cātmā ca pratiṣṭhitau stha iti. prāṇa iti* (Radhakrishnan 1953, p. 243) ‘On what are you and [your] soul based? On the in-breath’.
- 25 – In the physical sense: *prāṇo vā aṅgānaṃ rasaḥ* ‘life-breath is the essence of the limbs’ (*BU* I.3.19; Radhakrishnan, p. 160). In the nonphysical sense: *[mṛtyuḥ] ... nāpnot yo’yaṃ madhyamaḥ prāṇaḥ* ‘death did not take possession of him who was the middle breath’ (*BU* I.5.21; R, p. 181).
- 26 – I have here in mind the parallel case of the letters *a*, *u*, and *m* (*akāra*, *ukāra*, *makāra*)—making up *aum*—being afforded such a ritual quality, as, e.g., in the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* (699, 8).
- 27 – See Karunadasa 1967, p. 66, for additional Vedic and other sources.
- 28 – E.g., Warder’s extensive work, *Indian Buddhism* (1970), based on a critical study of the literature of the different schools of Buddhism, in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Chinese, does not even have a reference in the index to this topic, or even to *hṛdaya* (the terminology being given by Warder in Sanskrit).

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- 29 – While the question of just what the Buddha's actual words were will likely never be resolved, I agree with Warder's view (chap. 7) that the mention by name at the First Council is at least indicative of a Sutta's antiquity.
- 30 – Professor Leonard Priestley of the University of Toronto, however, observes (in personal communication) that the material is not identical in all the versions.
- 31 – Here *kāya* is used in the sense of 'body' (*rūpa*) and not as a collective term for *phassa*, *vedanā*, and *saññā* (*supra*).
- 32 – The asterisk here means, 'does not occur in the literature'.
- 33 – See Davids and Stede, p. 285, for the complete entry.
- 34 – *na bhangakkhaṇe ṭhpeti sayam bhijjamānattā, khīyamāno viya vaṭṭisneho dipasikhaṃ; na ca anupālanapavattanaṭṭhapanānubhavavirahitaṃ, yathāvuttakkhaṇe tassa tassa sādhanato ti daṭṭhabbaṃ* (W, p. 378).
- 35 – Others in the list of twenty-two faculties (*indriya*) are as follows: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, [bodily] pleasure, [bodily] pain, [mental] joy, [mental] grief, equanimity, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, understanding, I-shall-come-to-know-the-unknown, final-knowledge, and final-knower (chap. XVI, no. 1; Nāṇamoli, p. 559). It should be noted, however, that the eye, ear, nose, and tongue, unlike the rest in the list, seem to be localized.
- 36 – Note also Buddhaghosa pointing out that the 'life faculty' serves as the only materiality of 'non-percipient' beings: *Asaññīnaṃ rūpato jvitindriyanavakaṃ evā ti* (chap. XVII; N, p. 478; W, p. 192). Again, there is no reference to a 'heart faculty'.
- 37 – The full argument in support of *hadayavatthu*, given prior to the lines quoted, goes as follows: "But the logical reasoning should be understood in this way. In the five-constituent becoming, [that is, in the sense sphere and fine material sphere,] these two elements have as their support produced (*nippanna*) derived matter. Herein, since visible-data base, etc., and nutritive-essence, are found to occur apart from what is bound up with faculties, to make them the support would be illogical. And since these two elements are found in a continuity that is devoid of the femininity and masculinity faculties [i.e., in the Brahma world], to make them the support would be illogical too. And in the case of the life-faculty. . ." (ibid.).
- 38 – It may also be noted here that because the misrepresentation of the Buddha appears in the Abhidhamma, it provides further evidence to the scholarly claim that the Abhidhamma is of later origin.



39 – See Barasch 1993, pp. 58 ff., for an update of the literature, which has now come to identify neuropeptides—“stars scattered through the bodily firmament” as he puts it, as the “information molecules.”

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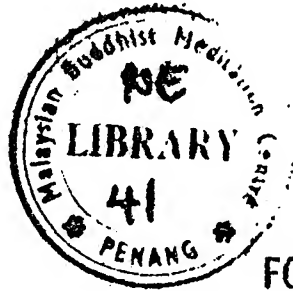
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Pali Text Society  
TRANSLATION SERIES No. 35

# THE PITAKA-DISCLOSURE : (PETAKOPADESA)

According to  
KACCĀNA THERA

Translated from the Pali by  
BHIKKHU ÑĀṆAMOLI



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## EDITORIAL NOTE

Before he died, in March, 1960, Nāṇamoli Bhikkhu<sup>1</sup> had finished, for the Pali Text Society, his translation of the *Nettipakaraṇa* and had sent his typescript to me including the Introduction, the notes, the four Indexes, and the Appendix. So, there to be printed and published, was a whole book, provided, too, with the complete critical apparatus the translator had designed and executed for it. It was published as *The Guide*, PTS Translation Series, No. 33, in 1962.<sup>2</sup> The translation of the *Peṭakopadesa* has not been so fortunate in all these respects. It was while he was working on the *Netti* that, finding he had constantly to refer to *Pe*, the Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli decided to translate this work also. His typescript, which forms the present volume, was sent to me from the Island Hermitage at Dodanduwa in Ceylon after his death in accordance with written instructions he had left there and in accordance with the assurances he had made to me from time to time that this book also was intended for publication by the Pali Text Society—a project it is proud to undertake.

When I received this typescript I found he had finalized the translation itself no less than all the notes except for filling in some two dozen references.<sup>3</sup> I have been able to supply most of these, though a few still escape me, such as the exact reference to *D. ii* in § 232, references in §§ 370, 430, and 535, and a reference in note 692/1.

Naturally it was a very great thing to have the main body of the work and all the notes in their finished form, also to find that the List of Similes, the List of Quotations, and the Appendix were ready for printing. There was moreover hand-written material for ten Sections of the Introduction. Of these all but three had been carefully revised. These three exceptions are Sections III, IX, and XI. Section III, *Mistakes in the Texts*, had a note attached to it calling it "uncorrected draft" but, ignoring too a further note which said it needed "heavily and drastically cutting down", I have presented it below more or less as I found it. It seemed

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1 He was an Englishman who was ordained into the Saṅgha in Ceylon in 1948 and lived at the Island Hermitage from then till he died.

2 See my remarks there on p. lxiii.

3 These are not the Untraced References spoken of in Section VIII of the Introduction to this book and listed on pp. 384-5.

unwise to tamper with it. I have also kept the numbering of the sub-headings as I found it though it tallies with neither of the lists of corruptions the translator had drawn up ; both of these lists now appear in this Section.

For Section IX there were rough notes only, written on scraps of paper. Practically all of these notes now appear in this Section for the sake of their intrinsic interest and for the method they indicate, even in their incomplete state, for intelligent textual criticism. Whether, under the heading *Non-Pali spellings and forms* the Bhikkhu Nānamoli would have arranged the entries alphabetically had he lived I have no means of telling. I have ventured to make no alterations as I know he disliked them.

It is a matter for great regret that there seemed to be no material at all for Section XI (General) which, judging by a list he had made of the Sections for the Introduction, he had planned to write. Perhaps the notes I have included at the end of Section IX really belong to what would have been Section XI ; they were not marked in any way. But if they were meant in fact for Section XI then they provide some indication of points that might have been considered there in detail.

The Introduction therefore was not in a completely finished form. Nevertheless, the translator had to a large and valuable extent written about *Pe* in his Introduction to *The Guide*, a brilliant examination of various of its problems which most certainly should be consulted. Yet, unfinished though it may be, the Introduction to the *Pitaka-Disclosure* still offers the student of the archaic *Petakopadesa* a sound basis for some rational comprehension of why the work was composed and what, in its capacity as "guide" and "disclosure", it endeavoured to clarify and lay down ; at the same time it refers to many topics of importance and interest that are further discussed in the abundant notes. These would also be of inestimable value to anyone who at any time were to try to reconstitute this very corrupt but rewarding text.

On the other hand, material for both the General Index and the Glossary was totally lacking. That the translator had certainly regarded them as necessary is evident from his type-written page listing the General Contents of the *Pitaka-Disclosure*. In the event, I regarded the making of the General Index and the Glossary as my responsibility. In compiling the former I sought to follow the General Index to *The Guide* as faithfully as possible. The two books

are, if not exactly a pair, then readily comparable. Perhaps in order to emphasize or demonstrate this, the Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli rendered the same Pali words by the same English words throughout both these volumes. Their substance and their subject-matter covers a wide field of closely packed technical terms, each one of which merited an entry in the Index.

Now that these two works have been translated with such great insight, the interpretations they put on the many verse and prose passages they adduce stand out with a clarity illuminating not only the inner meaning of these passages themselves but, through them, many another context, ideally the whole Pali Canon, as well.

I. B. HORNER.

*London, 1962.*

## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

I. *The Piṭaka-Disclosure*

The *Peta-kopadesa* (translated "Piṭaka-Disclosure") and the *Nettipakarāṇa* (translated "The Guide" <sup>4</sup>) set forth a method, the same in both cases, for composing commentaries on the Buddha's Utterance as recorded in the Suttas. It has been established (in the Introduction to the translation of the *Nettipakarāṇa*) that *Peta-kopadesa* is the older prototype of the other work and not, as had been supposed, its continuation.

The later *Netti*, with its more polished and economical presentation of the method, its text later rectified and fixed by Ācariya Dhammapāla in the 6th Century A.C., with its commentary by him and its 15th (?) Century *Tīkā*, quite eclipsed the older work. It would seem, in fact, that only veneration for the illustrious name connected with both books by tradition saved the *Pe* from the fate that overtook Upatissa Thera's *Vimuttimaggā*, superseded by Buddhaghosa Thera's *Visuddhimaggā*, the older work being eventually lost in Pali and existing today only in Chinese versions.<sup>5</sup> There are still those who teach the *Method* using the *Netti* and its commentaries; but the *Pe* has remained through the centuries, and remains, in complete neglect, copied from time to time, but unread and uncorrected (till this century when a Burmese Thera compiled a commentary on it). Its very old unedited material has been kept frozen with all the mistakes of a single ancient MS.

The earliest extant treatise in Pali on how to make commentaries is unrevised by Ācariya Buddhaghosa or any of his successors. It belongs to a period long before him, being composed presumably in India quite probably before the 1st Century B.C.

(The name <sup>6</sup> *Peta-kopadesa* presupposes a *piṭaka* of which this is the *upadesa*. The word *piṭaka* in the metaphorical sense of a "basket of scripture" appears in a single phrase repeated in

4 Translated by Nāṇamoli Bhikkhu and published as *The Guide* in *PTS*. Translation Series, No. 33, 1962 (I.B.H.).

5 Since Nāṇamoli Bhikkhu wrote this Introduction two events have occurred connected with *Vimuttimaggā*: (1) the first translation into English has been made under the title *The Path of Freedom*, translated from the Chinese by the Rev. N. R. M. Ehara, Soma Thera, and Kheminda Thera, Colombo, 1961; (2) a palm-leaf MS. of the work written in Sinhalese characters has been found in Ceylon (I.B.H.).

6 (Among the many notes for this Introduction left by the late Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli I found one which I decided to insert here. It is enclosed by brackets. I.B.H.)

various Suttas (e.g. *A.* ii, 191 ; *M.* i, 520) but is not applied to the Buddha's Utterance in the Suttas. The word *peṭakīn* appears in an inscription at Sāñcī (2nd or 1st Century B.C.) in the sense of "one who knows the Piṭaka(s)". The words *Tipiṭaka* and *Piṭakattaya* are found in Pali only in the Commentaries of Ācariya Buddhaghosa and his followers. Since the Sāñcī inscription uses the word *peṭakīn*, the *Petākopadesa* could, on that count, be as early as the 2nd Century B.C. or even perhaps a little earlier). For the history of Pali literature and exegesis this rather dry work is thus a valuable and indeed unique document. In its rather copious exemplifying material it represents the oldest layer of exegetical thought in the Theravāda outside the actual Canon (excluding perhaps the *Milindapañha*), a layer considerably older than that represented even by the *Netti* (itself prior to the main Pali commentaries).

What has been established in some detail elsewhere (see Introduction to *The Guide*) need only be summarized here. The *Netti* is a "revised and improved" version of the older *Pe*. Though dates are quite uncertain, the *Pe*'s mnemonic verses (the *Netti* has none) suggest a period when the oral transmission of books was still in full vogue (in Ceylon the Tipiṭaka was committed to writing in the 1st Century B.C.). The marked difference in style between the two works suggests separation by a considerable distance in time or place or both. Both works set forth the same method. Its object is to set up scaffolding for building commentarial edifices. Ancient tradition attributes this method to the Buddha's disciple Mahākaccāna Thera, an attribution which modern European scholarship rejects. There is nothing whatever to indicate who were the compilers of the two works which present the method and exemplify it. The *Pe* itself, however, claims that the name of its author or originator is Kaccāyanagotta (§ 8) or Mahākaccāyana (terminals of Chs. I, III-V, VII, VIII, and conclusion). It is suggested in two different ways that he was personally known to and approved by the Buddha (terminals of Chs. I, VI); he is called Jambuvanavāsī (terminals of Ch. III, and the conclusion)<sup>7</sup> and Suttavebhāṅgī (terminal of Ch. VIII).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Jambu/Jambudīpa and Vanavāsī/Vanavāsa an ancient town on the coast of N. Kanara halfway up the Malabar coast (Lamotte, pp. 327-8). Any connexion? (I do not know whether Nānamoli Bhikkhu intended the last two sentences above, beginning with "The *Pe* itself", to go into his Introduction; they were on a loose piece of paper. The note about Jambu/Jambudīpa etc. given here is his. I.B.H.)



## II. Texts

The *Pe* has been printed three times in Pali, twice in Burmese script, and once in Roman script by the Pali Text Society. A third Burmese script edition can be reckoned if the Modern Commentary is also counted as one. There is no printed edition in Sinhalese script.

All these editions are found, on examination, to be full of mistakes, some very gross, a great proportion of which are common to all editions. The 1949 *PTS.* edition (though with some minor mistakes of its own) is the most useful as a document since it exhibits well, with a generous mass of variant readings, the general state of the MSS. and how they fall into two main groups, with none able to correct the huge number of errors common to all. Its four MSS., one in Sinhalese script (on paper and consequently modern) and three Burmese, are referred to respectively as *S.*, *B*<sub>1</sub>, *B*<sub>2</sub>, and *B*<sub>3</sub>. The latter two, which closely agree, furnish its basic text. Against them an enormous number of variants are provided by *S.* and *B*<sub>1</sub>, largely in agreement together. Thus two, and only two, distinct sets of MSS. are shown by the *PTS.* edition. Also in virtually every instance where *S.* and *B*<sub>1</sub> differ from *B*<sub>2</sub> and *B*<sub>3</sub> their version is worse and often consists not only of words wrong in context but often of meaningless jumbles of syllables. All this simply indicates that all four MSS. stem originally from a single (presumably rather dilapidated) ancient MS. containing the mistakes common to all, from which have descended one set of "good" copies represented by *B*<sub>2</sub> and *B*<sub>3</sub>, and another set based on a bad copy of the same single original or its offspring, represented by *S.* and *B*<sub>1</sub>. The first set can be called Type I and the second Type II. A supposed original MS. may have been imported into Burma (Thaton?) from Ceylon or S. India at an early date, all other Indian and Sinhalese MSS. having been subsequently destroyed by time and neglect, without offspring.

The first Burmese printed edition (1917) gives a text, without alternative readings, which is very close to the *PTS.* edition as based on *B*<sub>2</sub> and *B*<sub>3</sub>. It shows only a few quite minor variants and so belongs to Type I. But its consistent concurrence with the *PTS.* basic text in all major mistakes is not unimportant in view of the independence of its MS. sources.

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(The Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli had drafted another list of headings of *Varieties of Corruption*. It is as follows) :—

1. Discrepant versions, § 491/518 ; Silamūlaka (p. 44/88)
2. Corruption of letters, § 246 *paññ-* for *pañc-*
3. Corruption of words, §§ 302, 305
4. Substitution of words, §§ 43, 246, 305, 676
5. Insertion of letters, § 829 *vi(ci)riyam*
6. Inversion of words or phrases, § 305 (*na hāpeti . . .*)
7. Omission of words, §§ 324, 363 (*satindriyam*)
8. Omission of phrases, §§ 194, 323, 514, 591–3
9. Mispunctuation, § 281 ff.
10. Exchange of blocks (reversal of ola-leaf), Ch. VII, §§ 374–9, 380–4
11. Intrusion of extraneous ola-leaf, Ch. VII
12. Loss of ola-leaves, Chs. VI–VII
13. Displacement of ola-leaves, Ch. VI
14. Insertion of reduplications, §§ 91, 485
15. Muddle of mātikās, §§ 21, 194
16. Mistaken attempts at improvement. All *PTS*'s, *S.*, and *B*<sub>1</sub>

(Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu's notes then proceed as follows) : *N.B.*—The modern Sinhalese alphabet does not go back beyond the 9th Century or so and before that was a form of brahmi. Similar considerations apply to the modern Burmese alphabet. Consequently early copyists' mistakes of the kind consisting in misreading a letter will not follow the same lines as the familiar modern Sinhalese or Burmese mistakes of this sort.

1. *Wrong Syllables and Words.* (§ 164) *Balavaṃ bālopamasuttam yaṃ āsāya vā vedanīyaṃ kammaṃ gāhati tathā ce pi yaṃ yaṃ pāpakammaṃ anubhoti . . . bhāvitacitto bhāvitakāyo bhāvitapañño Mahānāmo aparittacetaso* (*PTS.*, *B*<sub>1</sub>, *B*<sub>2</sub> all agree to the letter). The passage as it stands suggests something on the following lines : "The strong child (fool) simile (or § 193 'the salt-barb simile') or the action which is to be felt through need even if one experiences any evil action . . . Mahānāma had kept cognizance in being, kept the body in being, kept understanding in being with not little heart"—which is rather nonsense and not at all what the author meant. On the strength of the word Mahānāmo, the Commentary has identified this passage with a Sutta at *S.* v, 408–10, where the name Mahānāma appears, and attempts to explain the words *balavaṃ bālopamasuttam* ("a strong fool-simile sutta"—sic) by that

Sutta. But in the mnemonic in § 193 this quotation is represented by the words *atha loṇasallopamaṃ*. Now the words in the quotation in § 164, *bhāvitakāyo bhāvitacitto bhāvitapañño* with *aparittacetaso*, suggest instead the Sutta at *A. i*, 249, lines 30–31, on *pāpakamma* (lines 18 and 21). That this Sutta is meant is shown by the simile of the *loṇaphala* (*N.B.*—*loṇasalla opamaṃ*, the salt-barb simile, in § 193) and so *balavaṃ bālopamaṃ* can be corrected to *loṇaphalopamaṃ* (the salt-grain simile). The misleading word *Mahānāma* (proper name) then turns out to be a corruption of *mahattā* at *A. i*, 249, line 31. With this there is no doubt that the amended version must read: *Loṇaphalopamasuttaṃ : yathā yathā vedanīyaṃ kammaṃ karoti tathā tathā vedanīyaṃ vipākam anubhoti . . . bhāvitacitto bhāvitakāyo bhāvitapañño mahattā aparittacetaso*. While the identification is thus unmistakable, once made, this is a rewritten version of the Sutta, not a proper quotation. The instance is a good one since the garblings in it are identical in all printed editions (even the MSS. of Type II only disagree on the first two words: *PTS.* and *S. lavakaṃ bālosamaṃ* and *Ba. lavaṇaṃ sallosamaṃ*); once identified it is easily corrected, and it shows the extent of the corrections needed on occasion, and how the Type II MSS. agree on the discordant chaotic alternatives they offer.

Another, on which all editions agree in the main, remains a puzzle. In § 156 occur the words *Nandiko* (so *PTS.* and *Ba.*; *Bb. nandiyo*) *Sakko isivuttapuririkāmaekarakkhe suttaṃ* (Type II MSS. have: *PTS.*'s *S. paririkū ca eka-* and *Ba. parikkhāya ca eka-*). *Bb.* has *-vuttha* for *-vutta*. See n. 156/2. The identification with the Nandiya Sutta at *A. v*, 334 f. does not solve all these difficulties. Commentary explains as follows: (see *Cy.* on *PTS.*, p. 45, line 8). The passage at *PTS.*, p. 87, lines 20–1 (= *Ba.*) *Yo tu na c' eva te sappurisam uggavādinī* is corrected in *Bb.* to the version at *A.* without reference to *Ba.* or *PTS.*

For other like instances see nn. 192/2, etc.

Of mistakes of this type belonging to the presumed single original MS. from which all the extant MSS. must have descended, some may have been in the original MS., presuming it to have been a Sinhalese one taken to Burma, and the rest will have arisen in the transcribing of it into Burmese script by a copyist.

A classification of these correctible mistakes of this nature does not seem to show any particular tendency. For instance, in modern Burmese script (as used on palm-leaf MSS.) the following confusions

are common : na/ta, ca/va, cc/d, bb/i, and less easy g/bh, s/p, while in modern Burmese script v/g/p, t/bh/s, dhu/ra are the easiest. That the more unfamiliar the subject-matter the more likely are mistakes is well instanced in this work. But, before trying to apply this method, it has to be admitted that the assumed prototype MS. may well have been written in Ceylon and then transcribed in Burma before the appearance of the modern Burmese and Sinhalese scripts. Both are ultimately derived from a form of the Indian Brahmi script, the Ceylon form of which was in use in the Island, apparently, till about the 7th Century A.C., when transition to the modern ("sounded") alphabet began to take place. The modern alphabet, with some differences, began by about the 13th Century A.C. The modern Burmese script probably does not go back, in its present form, beyond the time of King Anawrahta (11th Century). The Ceylon MS. might have been first transcribed in Thaton before its conquest or in Upper Burma after that. The question thus of the scripts in which these "original" mistakes of syllables and words took place looks as if it must remain undecided. They can only be rectified by whatever means is to hand ; by identified quotation or allusion or by cross-reference to another part of the work when recognized, or by the needs of the context judged according to the general trends of the *Pe* itself and of the Suttas as a whole.

2. *Omission of a Word, Sentence or Clause.* There is the omission in all editions (not checked in *Sa.*) of the clause No. 13, Injunction and Means, in both the Schedule (§ 72) and the detail (§ 155). That this is an omission is shown by the quotation from the *Pe* at *NettiA* p. 42 where it is included but only the verse-quotation given (see n. 155/4 and Appx. No. I, end). (*cuto ti* for *cutopapattī ti*, § 283, cf. p. 6).

The words missing in § 194 alike in both *PTS.* and *Ba.* are replaced in *Bb.* (whether on the authority of a MS. or by the editor's judgment is not shown). That the version in *Bb.* is right is shown by the detail that follows this Schedule.

There are other similar instances in §§ 514, 538, 591, etc;

3. *Wrong repetitions of a line or half-line* occur in several instances. The worst instance is in § 91 which contains two long ones (see n. 91/1). All editions agree to the letter, only *PTS.*'s Type II MSS. adding some confusion of their own, and a single instance of a variant in its Type I *Bb.* (*PTS.*, p. 31, n. 8). This is rectifiable by a

study of the subject-matter's pattern (by making up a table) and excising the repeated matter (as shown in n. 91/1). That the paragraph makes perfect sense after the excision of the repetitions (obvious enough once detected) without any adjustment is clear justification for this correction. Another (corrected by Commentary) appears in § 955 where the words *te akatasattā lokā majjhena vemattatāya paññattā. Katamo parikkhāro* from §§ 958–9 are wrongly repeated.

4. *Rearrangement of a Schedule* with consequent disruption of reference to the detail that follows occurs in § 21. This has a curious feature in that it substitutes for a system of 6 dyad and 4 triad combinations another, superficially rather similar, of 12 pairwise combinations. All editions agree (with only one discordant note from *PTS's* Type II MS. S.). The restoration is easy from the heads of the detail that follows on *PTS.*, pp. 13–19 (§§ 49–58).

5. *Forward or backward displacement of a sentence or phrase.* There are several of these. Two occur in §§ 815–817. In another, between §§ 891 and 892 the words *Imāni cattāri saccāni* appear displaced five lines up in all editions, corrected by Commentary. A bigger instance occurs on *PTS.*, p. 196, where the contents of §§ 801 and 802 have changed places. All editions agree. That this is a mistake is plain from the continuity of the sense.

6. *Displacement of a palm-leaf.* One of these occurs at the end of Ch. VII. It is a double one. First, the two final examples are interchanged, and then part of the first is displaced into the second. See §§ 985, 994, 1027. All editions agree; only Commentary corrects. Another is the displacement of the end of Ch. VI backwards to the middle of it, see §§ 569–72, and n. 619/1. Some further displacements in some MSS. only are noted on *PTS.*, pp. 137–42 and 188–93, which corrects them.

7. *Intrusion of a palm-leaf from another MS.* A palm-leaf from a *Sumangalavilāsinī* MS. intrudes into the middle of § 1002 (see n. 1002/3); all editions agree and *Cy.* accepts. The obviousness of the intrusion, once it is noticed and traced, the fact that when it is excised the two ends put together make, with a minor adjustment, the good sense required, and that this agrees with the version of this treatment appearing in the *NettiA*, remove all possible doubt here. This is the only such intrusion.

8. *Loss of palm-leaves.* This must have occurred at the end of Ch. VI and with the opening phrase of Ch. VII as indicated in

nn. 619/1 and 620/1. Lastly, there is the absurd mistake, which all editions insist on presenting, in the name of Ch. VIII ; see n. 1041/1. This must have arisen quite recently since initial titles and page-headings are a European conceit.

#### IV. Restorations

The modern Commentary, alive—and how could it not be—to the corruptness of the text, observes as follows (p. 353 in relation to the muddle at the end of Ch. VII) : *Tattha yaṃ yaṃ vattabbaṃ atthi / suttam pi atthi kamokkamaṃ / suttam pi atthi sankaraṃ / padam pi atthi kamokkamaṃ / padam pi atthi sankaraṃ / suttatthe pi atthe kamokkamo / suttattho pi atthi sankaro / Hārasampāto pi atthi kamokkamo / hārasampāto pi atthi sankaro / evaṃ taṃ taṃ vattabbaṃ tena tena hārasampātalakkhaṇena vicinitvā vicinitvā asankaram nijjātaṃ suparisuddhatthāne yutte yeva hi sati yuttatthāne nikkhepiya ṭhapayessāma / suttam pi suttattham pi hārasampātam pi yathāsāsanapatthāne tathā āgatanayānukkamena vaṇṇāyissāma // na hi agatigamaṇaṃ ariyehi gandhabbaṃ dhammaṃ saṃvaṇṇantena nāma īdisena bhavitabbaṃ ti manasikatvā dhammaṃ yeva garuṃ katvā // kena kāraṇena? // Yena hi ekena pi akkharena padena pi dunnikkhitto attho pi dunnayo hoti duggahito / ten' assa sāsanaṃ antaradhānāya saṃvattati (see A. ii, 147) // yenāpi ekenakkharenāpi sunikkhitto attho pi sunayo hoti sugahito ten' assa sāsanaṃ anantara-dhānāya saṃvattati //*

It is with these sentiments in mind that the translator has attempted restorations of the text in the notes to this translation beyond what the Commentary suggests. For this a few useful minor corrections are furnished by *Bb.* but they are only a drop in the ocean. The Commentary, however, is, in general, and in spite of its rather opulent length and wordiness, greatly helpful to an extent to which the notes to this translation do not do justice. Constantly it keeps coming to the rescue with ingenuity and judgment on numberless occasions. Only in certain instances its explanations seemed unacceptable, as for example in § 164 where, misled by the corruptions, “*balavaṃ bālopamaṃ*” and “*Mahānāma*”, to a wrong identification of a Sutta, it has explained accordingly (see p. xvi above); or in the case of the confusion at the end of Ch. VI, where it constitutes an extra chapter called “*Pakiṇṇaka*” (see § 619) between Chs. VI and VII, and treats the material of §§ 619–620 as a single sentence (as shown in all edns.), whereas this is where the



break between the material of Ch. VI and that of Ch. VII comes. Its explanation of *kāramahattā*, see n. 409/2, seems rather out of keeping with this early work and there is no reason to accept, as it does, this strange reading. Sometimes it seems to overlook the considerations of context, as in its acceptance of and comment on the phrase *Mahāvibhango aciratapānādo*, see n. 192/2. Other instances where it was necessary to differ from it are mentioned in the notes. This apart, however, the translator would pay a willing tribute to the careful and helpful work of a greatly respected Burmese scholar.

In making the restorations in the notes the translator has used all available aids. Where quotations from the Suttas are concerned and these can be traced, restoration is made easy. But at the same time it seemed not always justifiable simply to replace the Piṭaka version for the garbled one without careful consideration. For instance, in the case of §§ 43 and 304, a circumspect treatment of the quotation produces a version that is free from corruptions but differs quite a little from the Piṭaka version ; and such may indeed have been the version used by the compiler who had a variant before him or in his memory. Such as these therefore have been left in a state restored to good grammar and sense but not (as in *Bb.*) replaced outright by the Piṭaka version as we have it now (correct and better though that may be).

Displacements of sentences and paragraphs and whole sections (see above, p. xix) can be rectified by simple considerations of the flow of the sense.

Some corrupt passages can be found to be doubled elsewhere in an ungarbled form (e.g. §§ 91, 485), in which case a restoration is not difficult, it being not hard to judge the better version. And likewise the "Schedules" and the mnemonic verses against their detail help to correct each other.

Other corrupt passages have to be judged on their merits in the contexts in which they appear and a restoration can often be attempted after consideration of what meaning the whole context, immediate and distant, requires that the corrupt passage embedded in it should have.

While familiarity with the *Netti* is essential in restoring the text, nevertheless care has to be taken not to introduce into the *Pe* ideas that are peculiar to the later *Netti* (such as, say, the 4 kinds of co-ordination in Mode 16, which are not in the *Pe*).

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The whole Method with its exemplification is conceived simply for the purpose of correct rewording of known ideas. It is composed for the help of those who already intellectually know the Buddha's Teaching and the ideas contained in it. It is not intended as a means to discover anything new or to prove any conclusion at all, and if used for such purposes it is misused. Again, it is addressed not to those who do not yet know but wish to learn the Buddha's Teaching but, on the contrary, to those who wish to explain and expand the Teaching they have already intellectually learnt to those who do not know and wish to learn. Providing as it does a compendious substitute for the hugely bulky Suttapiṭaka as a testing measure, its object is simply to avoid wrong exegesis that may unwittingly lead to contradictions and to straying out of the Teaching as a whole. (See *The Guide*, Introduction, Section 5, for comparison of the form of the two books and for further details of the Method they both set forth.)

#### VI. *Rendering of Technical Terms*

This subject is treated at length in the Introduction to *The Guide* (q.v.). The same renderings have been used throughout in this translation of the *Pe* in order to facilitate comparison.

#### VII. *The Pali Commentaries' Debt to the Pe*

The Pali Commentaries' indirect debt to the *Pe* is their direct debt to the *Netti*. This, which is very large indeed, is discussed in the Introduction to *The Guide*. Their direct debt to it is limited to the quotations and allusions collected in the Appendix to this translation (q.v.).

#### VIII. *Quotations from the Tipiṭaka, etc. in the Pe*

See the list of quotations. There are some 211 traced quotations and 42 untraced, of which latter 17 are verse and 27 prose. Only 1 verse and 5 prose out of the untraced are shared with the *Netti*'s untraced quotations (check with the *Netti* (translation) Introduction<sup>8</sup>). As far as possible the same Sutta references have been given for the traced quotations as in the *Netti* Translation.

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The *Pe* has the habit of giving one verse and one prose quotation to illustrate its headings as in Chs. I, II, III, its Ch. VI taking up (with one exception) pairs of quotations already used in Ch. II.

Its way of presenting quotations is often disagreeably abbreviated, and lacking the *Netti*'s orderly precision. It often summarizes them (e.g. § 57 (a rare exception to the 1-verse-1-prose rule), §§ 74, 76, etc.). Sometimes it appears to rewrite a quotation as at § 43 (the *Sn.* verse but not as given in *Bb.* whose emendation of the *Sn.* text version does not seem authorized by a MS.), or § 188 (verse) or perhaps the author had variant texts. Sometimes it seems as if the quotations were made from memory. An instance of rewriting involving notable changes is found in § 273 (the *Samyutta* quotation—see nn. 273/6 and 273/7). In § 184 the prose quotation is stated so over-abbreviatedly (even after restoration) as to obscure what is meant, which the *Netti* shows properly. A *Majjhima* text is abbreviated in § 204. In § 395 the word *taco* is replaced by *chavicamam*. Also §§ 796 and 76.

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Explicit references are made to the (*Cūla*) “*Niddesa*” (§ 283), the “*Anguttara*” (§ 53), the “*Ekuttarika*” (= *Anguttara* : §§ 22, 31), the “*Samyutta*” (§§ 28, 35, 43, 49, 74, 159), to the *Udāna* (§ 175, not traced), and to individual *Suttas* (§§ 174, 192), to the *Majjhima Nikāya* (§ 271), to the *Pañcanikāya* (§ 45), the “*Maggavibhanga*” (§ 353), the *Mahākammavibhanga* (§ 702) and to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* (§ 884).

The only quotation that seems neither traceable nor properly restorable is that in § 329 (*PTS.*, p. 92).

### IX. *Special Features* <sup>9</sup>

*Some Terms and Expressions of doubtful establishment (possible corruptions)*

ananvemāni (*PTS.*, p. 101)

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- palika (*PTS.*, p. 142)  
 bujjhitassa (pp. in gen.) opposed to buddha (*PTS.*, p. 204)  
 kilesomaṃ (§ 260)  
 anāgamī (= anāgata) (*PTS.*, p. 177)  
 kitapaññatti (only in *Bb.*, others defective) (§ 389)  
 dve puggalakatāni (§ 142)  
 anajj(h)abhāvanā, anajj(h)abhāvo (*PTS.*, p. 35, line 10 ; p. 40,  
 line 19)

*Some Terms accepted by Commentary but certainly corruptions*

- mahāvibhango aciratapānādo (§ 192)  
 isivutt(h)apuririkāma-ekarakkhe (*PTS.*, p. 45)  
 kāramahattassa (*PTS.*, p. 105)  
 bhava-apevirittā (*PTS.*, p. 106)  
 nioṭṭhāna (§ 556)  
 tatth'abhicchedo (*PTS.*, p. 108)

*Special Terms*

- 2 pariññā (§ 444)  
 4 upādānāni with bhavopādāni (§ 342)  
 2 atthā : purisattho vacanattho (*PTS.*, p. 182)

*Misuse of Similes*

- 3rd jhāna simile (§ 418)

*Wrong Order*

- 4 paṭisambhidā, (§§ 103–106)  
 10 Tathāgatabalāni (§ 96 ff.)  
 4 perversions <sup>10</sup> (§§ 415, 513, 1063)  
 4 saññā (§§ 480, 505 ff.)

*Non-Pali spellings and forms* <sup>11</sup>

- duve (for dve) 1, 4, 228 (but dve 5, 86, 258)  
 sutamayī (for sutamayā) 5, 245, 747, 1017, 1025, 1035 (but -mayā  
 858)  
 cintāmayī (for cintāmayā) 5, 245, 747, 1017, 1025, 1027, 1035, 1038  
 bhāvanāmayī (for bhāvanāmayā) 245, 747, 1017, 1086  
 yad uccate (for yaṃ vuccate) 714

<sup>10</sup> *vipallāsa.*

<sup>11</sup> The numbers after each entry are paragraph numbers.



- paridāgha (for pariḷāha) 28, 47, 947 ff. (but pariḷāha 826, paridāha 651, 738, paridahanti 714)  
 Ekuttarika (for Anguttara) 22, 31 (see *Miln.*, p. 392; cf. Ekottarāgama, Lamotte, p. 169-71)—but Anguttara 53  
 jhānapāramitā (principal virtue of the fifth Mahāyāna Bodhi-sattva stage, Skr dhyānapāramitā, Obermiller, p. 35, n. 2) 600, No. xv, 619 (not a term current in Pali)  
 anajjhā-bhāva(nā) 114, 137  
 ājīvaka, aññājīvaka (in sense of taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ and aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ) 137, 138  
 Saṃyuttake (for Saṃyutta-nikāye) 28, 35, 43, 159, 160  
 sāni (for saka- in *Dh.* 240) 31, 170  
 kālaṅkata (for kālakata) 35, 83  
 kālaṃ kiriyaṃ (for kālakiriya) 468  
 anekadhātūhi (for anekadhātūsu) 55  
 mama (for mayā) 55  
 ceti (for cāti = ca + iti) 63  
 niddesayati (for niddis(s)iyati) 66  
 niccaṃ iti (for niccaṃ ti) 66  
 silavatam (for silabbatam) 82 (but silabbatam 138)  
 cha abhiññe (for chaḷabhiññe) 85  
 akammaṃ viharitā 604  
 akammaṃ viharissa 82  
 t̥hitakappi as arahant 93  
 paṭivedhanabhāvo as arahant 93  
 cetanābhabbo as arahant 93  
 rakkhaṇābhabbo as arahant 93  
 sace ceteti na parinibbāyi, no ce ceteti parinibbāyi as arahant 93, cf. 950  
 sace anurakkhati na parinibbāyi, no ce anurakkhati parinibbāyi as arahant 93  
 pubbulho (for bubbulo) 173, twice (note Burmese spellings of this word favour pupphulo)  
 vācāmma (for vacīkamma) 237  
 dānamayikaṃ (for dānamayaṃ) 199, 984, 994  
 dosajanitena (for dosajena) 201  
 sabhaggato (for sabhā-gato) 204  
 parisaggato (for parisā-gato) 204  
 samaggata (for samatā-gata) 819  
 khalu (for kho) 208

- asubhāya upaparikkhā (for asubhassa u-) 210  
 anagghāta (for anāghāta) 501  
 nibbatti (for nivatti) 234  
 pahīneyya (for pahātabba) 257, 258, but pajahitabbā and  
 pahātabbā 262  
 anāgāmī (for anāgata) 258, 712  
 upadisiyati (for upadissati) 258  
 byādhimatta (for na adhimatta) 268  
 anuññātam-khamam (for anuññātakhamam) 273, but anuññāta-  
 khama at end of 273  
 gati (in sense of scope) 347  
 anomattiya 389, anomaddiya 600 (non-lapse)  
 appamāṇa (for appamaññā) 562, 602, 1070  
 abhibhūmi-āyatana (for abhibhāyatana) 602  
 palirodha (for paḷibodha) 615, but palibodha 609-10  
 lokika (for lokiya) 72, 123, 165, 217, 312, 691, 709, 724, 988, but  
 lokiya 81, 214  
 adhina (for adhīna) 362, 733  
 manosankhāra (for citta-) 790  
 paccate (middle form) 857  
 mokkha (for vi-) 861  
 ajjhosanna (but ajjhosita elsewhere) 911

*Words reliably established*

	PTS. Pe p.	Para. No.
vipurisa	91, 92	321, 322
pariyesiyanto (ppr. pass.)	93	334
nirutti . . . niropayitabbam	92	327
orambhāgiyāni indriyāni	179	723 (but see n. 723/1)
vāretabbā (4 mahābhūtāni)	103	393
pīḷhā (pl.)	109	425
atha . . . atha (for yadi . . . yadi)	78	269
uttila (m.)	75	258
ālapati (unusual use)	96	355
abhinīhita	38	125

The verse at § 278 does not distinguish clearly what the function of this *hāra* (conveying) is, i.e. to show the Teaching as the four Truths, and it does not distinguish it from *vicaya*.

§ 279 f. makes the whole of Ch. I redundant, which has been corrected in *Netti*, by absorbing all the exposition of the four Truths under the first *hāra* (cf. § 283). Also the mention here of the "18 Root words" is out of place.

It is quite impossible that the *Pe* *Desanā-hāravibhanga* (*Pe*, p. 81-2) could have been composed either by the same person or after the *Netti* *Desanāhāravibhanga* (*Netti*, p. 5). Similarly the *Vicayahāravibhanga*.

The *Pe* *Adhiṭṭhānahāra* forgets to mention *sattādhitthāna* etc., in Ch. II, an omission corrected in *Netti* *Adhiṭṭhānahāra*.

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### *Theories of Causality and Conditionality*

In Ch. III a three-membered causal (*word illegible*<sup>12</sup>) is used in connexion with the Six Roots (§§ 198 f., 208, 211, 245, 370). This consists of the cause (*hetu*), which has an outcome (*nissanda*) in this same life, and a fruit (*phala*) upon reappearance (*nibbatti*) in the next existence. Though the three terms are found here and there in the Suttas, they are not apparently specifically organized, as here. This is then given as a threefold division of Dependent Arising (§ 375).

Cause (*hetu*) and condition (*paccaya*) are differentiated (§ 312 ff.) and defined. But the definitions of cause and condition in § 402 ff. do not seem adhered to in § 830.

*Nissanda* = physical causality, and *phala* = moral causality.

The *sotāpanna* and *sakadāgāmi* need not have any *jhāna* for their paths and fruitions. The *anāgāmi* and *arahant* must have at least the first *jhāna* for their paths and fruitions (see e.g. § 741-2)—this is the meaning of *vītarāgabhūmi*.

### X. Quotations from the *Pe* in the Pali Commentaries

Quotations from the *Pe* in the Commentaries are given as an Appendix (q.v.). There may be others as well but all those traced have been included.

The name in the form "*Petake*" is used in introducing some of these quotations, some of which are not found in the *Pe* now. This has led to a suggestion that the term *Petaka* might refer to another work now lost (P. V. Bapat, *VM.*, p. xliii f.); but this can

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<sup>12</sup> It might be "action".

be ruled out since the term is used in the *NettiA* of a quotation traceable in the *Pe* (Appx., quotation No. 1). Accordingly, as to the other quotations attributed to the "*Petaka*" by the Commentaries but not found in the *Pe* as it exists now, two explanations are possible. The one is that there may have been variant versions of the *Pe* current at the time the Commentaries were composed, some of which lacked the missing quoted passages, and the *Pe* version today is the descendant of one of them. (There are differences in the version in No. 1 as compared with the *Pe* texts; similarly there are even today some texts of the *Milindapañha* which contain paragraphs lacking in other texts.) The other is that the missing passages were from that part of the end of Ch. VI which is now lost. The explanation may actually be either or both. The work calls itself *Petakopadesa* (§§ 71, 193, 249, 435, 1040, 1112) and *Petaka* (§ 572).

*Appx. Quotation No. 1.* Seven paragraphs from the *Pe* cited by *NettiA* (*Pe*, pp. 44–6) but with some differences from the published *Pe* texts. First, some sentences in the *Pe* texts are missing in the quotation. It can be assumed with practical certainty that this is simply due to abbreviation by Ācariya Dhammapāla, who merely wanted to illustrate a point, and this would also explain why some paragraphs are out of order in the quotation as compared with the present *Pe* text.

The first paragraph in the quotation (equivalent to § 161 and missing clause) fortunately supplies a deficiency in the *Pe* text, which is obvious. The citation of the same second Piṭaka text from the *Dīgha* in this paragraph is made differently in the *NettiA* quotation. This may be due to Ācariya Dhammapāla's sense of editorship (cf. *Netti*, p. 200 ff.).

The second paragraph in the quotation from the *Pe* (cf. § 162) gives the same two Piṭaka citations, the second being again more tidily presented; but in both instances the observations found in the present *Pe* texts are missing in the *NettiA* quotation. This can be put down to abbreviation by Ācariya Dhammapāla, whose object in quoting was to illustrate a point.

The third paragraph in the quotation has the same heading as that in *Pe* § 163, but only a verse Piṭaka citation is given and that is a different one from the one found in the present *Pe* texts. This could be accounted for by assuming that a variant version was before the quoter, containing a different illustrative verse. It seems

less likely that the quoter would have changed the verse because he disagreed with its employment under this head.

The fourth paragraph (see § 164) simply gives the heading and the same verse citation but no more.

These four paragraphs in the quotation follow the order of the present *Pe* texts.

After a passing sentence there follow in the *NettiA* three more paragraphs quoted from the *Pe*, two of which correspond to *Pe* §§ 155, 156 but in reverse order and the third, not in the *Pe*, supplies part of a paragraph which examination of the composition of the *Pe*'s list of headings shows it ought to contain for completeness both in the Schedule (§ 72) and the detail between § 155 and § 156 as they appear in the present *Pe*. The headings and the Piṭaka citations in the first two agree with the present *Pe* text, but no prose citation or observation is quoted in any of the three. The verse citation in the third paragraph (heading missing in the present *Pe*) is found also at *Pe* § 51 in a different context.

*Appx. Quotation No. 2.* This passage, which would seem to be prose rather than verse, is missing from the present *Pe* texts. It sums up the aim of the *Modes* in Combined Treatment (Ch. VII) and reflects a similar sentence introducing the *Modes* in Separate Treatment (Ch. VI, § 277). Since the opening words of Ch. VII are missing along with the end of Ch. VI, it can be fitted in here with question.

*Appx. Quotation No. 3.* This passage is not found in the *Pe* texts now. Its subject-matter suggests it could have come from the regions of §§ 560-99 or § 654 or from the missing end of Ch. VI. That it was highly regarded as a statement is evidenced by the fact that it is quoted in no less than four commentaries and referred to twice in another, involving three different commentators.

*Appx. Quotation No. 4.* Found only in the *Niddesa* Commentary is really rather puzzling. If it belongs to the *Pe* at all and the attribution is not a mistake, it must either belong to the missing portion of Ch. VI, or have been found only in some versions whose descendants have not survived.

*Appx. Quotations Nos. 5-7.* These are strictly rewritten passages rather than direct quotations from the *Pe*, though their similarity is obvious. No source is acknowledged for Nos. 5 and 6, while No. 7 is attributed to "the Ancients" (porāṇā).

*Appx. Quotation No. 10.*<sup>13</sup> Differences from the present *Pe* text are only such tidying up as might be expected from a meticulous commentator quoting a poorly copied MS. It would be interesting to know, which is impossible unfortunately, whether the corrections which Ācariya Dhammapāla's quotation of this paragraph in his *Netti* Commentary show against the present *Pe* texts might indicate the amount of work he did in cleaning up the *Netti* texts which he edited and commented on.

*Appx. Quotation No. 11.* This is not so much a quotation as a tidied up and partly rewritten (version) of the 16 Sections of the *Pe*'s Ch. VII. The way in which Ācariya Dhammapāla has done this suggests a tacit criticism by him of the manner in which the same two Sections are presented in the *Pe* itself.

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<sup>13</sup> In Nānamoli's MS. this and the next are both called No. 11. I think I am right in attributing the remarks in this paragraph to No. 10 (I.B.H.).

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(References are to page-numbers in *PTS.* editions unless otherwise stated)

- A.* Anguttara-Nikāya  
*Ba., Bb.* Burmese-script printed edns. of *Pe*  
*CPD.* Trenckner's Critical Pali Dictionary (Copenhagen), vol. 1  
*Cy.* Modern Commentary on the *Pe*  
*Dl.* Dhammapada (verse no.)  
*D.* Dīgha-Nikāya  
*Dhs.* Dhammasaṅgaṇī (para. no.)  
*Iti.* Itivuttaka  
*Jā.* Jātaka  
*M.* Majjhima-Nikāya  
*MA.* Commentary on M (Papañcasūdanī)  
*Netti* Nettippakaraṇa  
*NettiA* Commentary on *Netti* (by Dhammapāla Ācariya) (Part *PTS. Netti* edn., rest Sinhalese-script Hewavitarne edn.)  
*Pe* Peṭakopadesa  
*PTS.* Pali Text Society  
*PED.* Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary  
*Ppn.* "Path of Purification," English Translation of the Visuddhimagga, Colombo  
*Ps.* Paṭisambhidā-magga  
*PtnI.* Tika Paṭṭhāna  
*Vbh.* Vibhanga  
*Vis.* Visuddhimagga  
*S.* Saṃyutta-Nikāya  
*Sa.* Sinhalese-script Palm-leaf MS. of *Pe*  
*Sn.* Suttanipāta (verse no.)  
*Thag.* Theragāthā (verse no.)  
*Ud.* Udāna

## TEXTS USED

*Peṭakopadesa*

1. Printed Latin-script edition, published by the Pali Text Society, London, 1949 (referred to as *PTS.*).
2. Printed Burmese-script edition, published by the Zabu Meit Swe Press, Rangoon, 1917 (referred to as *Ba.*).
3. Printed Burmese-script Chatṭhasangīti Piṭaka edition, Rangoon, 1956 (referred to as *Bb.*).
4. Palm-leaf MS. in Sinhalese script, belonging to the Library at the Valapola Vihāra, Pānadura, Ceylon (referred to as *Sa.*).

*Peṭakopadesa-Atṭhakathā*, Modern 20th-century Commentary on the *Peṭakopadesa* composed in Burma, published by the Ratanasiddhi Pitaka Press, Mandalay, 1926. (This is the only commentary, since no ancient one appears to have ever existed ; the reference to a commentary to this work in the *Gandhavaṃsa* (*JPTS.*, 1886, p. 65) is almost certainly a mistake by the author of the *G.*) (referred to as *Cy.*).



# THE PITAKA-DISCLOSURE

## CONTENTS IN DETAIL

(Note: The following "schedules", etc., are found in the body of the work, which give the contents of parts of it; some are terminal and refer back while some are initial and refer forward) :—

	<i>Para.</i>	<i>Range.</i>	
	284	Gives number of heads under which Truth is presented in Chs. I-VII	
Ch. I	16	Initial schedule for §§ 22-58	
	47	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 22-42	
	61	Terminal summary of heads presenting Truth-combinations	
	71	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 49-58	
Ch. II	72	Initial schedule heads for 3 Groupings in Ch. II; refers to §§ 73-80 and 152-92	
	111	Terminal summary of knowledge of instance and non-instance; refers back to §§ 97-109	
	151	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 73-80	
	193	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 152-92	
Ch. III	194	Initial schedule for §§ 195-248	
	249	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 195-246	
Ch. IV	276	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 250-75 (4 headings)	
Ch. VI	436	Initial summary for §§ 437-45 (Section I)	
	548	Terminal summary for §§ 446-547 (Section II)	
	549	Initial summary for §§ 550-? (Section III)	
	600	Initial schedule of heads for §§ 601-19	
Ch. VIII	1112	Terminal mnemonic verse for §§ 1041-111	

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### CHAPTER I.—THE DISPLAY OF THE NOBLE TRUTHS

<i>Trsln.</i>	<i>Para.</i>		<i>PTS. edn., p. and line</i>
	1	Homage	11-4
I. INTRODUCTION			
	2-7	The Arising of Right View	15-227
	8-15	The Guide in the Search	31-522
II. THE DISPLAY OF THE NOBLE TRUTHS			
16-21		1. SCHEDULE AND DEFINITIONS	523-620
		2. ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS	
		<i>i. The 4 Truths—Unshared</i>	
		[A] Suffering's Specific Characteristics	
22-34		(a) 13 Unshared	621-912
35-6		(b) 2 Shared	913-22
37-8		Discussion	923-104
39-41		[B]; [C], [D], 3 remaining Truths—Unshared	105-21
42		[ABCD] 4 Truths—Shared	1022-1112
43		Extinction Element	1113-18
44-6		Discussion	1119-27
47		Mnemonic verse (§§ 22-42)	12

<i>Trsln. Para.</i>		<i>PTS. edn., p. and line</i>
48-58	ii. <i>Miscellaneous Truths—Shared</i> (AB, AC, AD, ABC, ABD, ADC, BC, BD, BCD, CD)	13 <sup>1</sup> -19 <sup>11</sup>
59-70	Discussion	19 <sup>12</sup> -21 <sup>14</sup>
62-70	All-inclusive Treatments	
71	Mnemonic verse (§§ 49-58)	21 <sup>15</sup> -22 <sup>3</sup>
71	Conclusion	22 <sup>3</sup> -end

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	2. ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS, ETC.	
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74	2. Morality	
75	3. Penetration	
76	4. the Adept	
77	5. Corruption and Morality	
78	6. Corruption and Penetration	
79	7. Corruption, Penetration and the Adept	
80	8. Morality and Penetration	
81	Discussion of the 4 basic types of Thread	29 <sup>2</sup> -4
82	(1) Corruption—3 kinds	29 <sup>5</sup> -14
83	(2) Morality	29 <sup>14</sup> -20
84-8	(3) Penetration—Initiates	29 <sup>21</sup> -30 <sup>end</sup>
89-95	(4) the Adept—10 kinds	31 <sup>1</sup> -32 <sup>11</sup>
96-128	The Perfect One's 10 Powers	32 <sup>12</sup> -39 <sup>2</sup>
129	The 4 basic types of Thread as 5 types	39 <sup>3</sup> -5
130-5	(1) Corruption	39 <sup>6</sup> -40 <sup>9</sup>
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141	(3a) Seeing	41 <sup>7</sup> -14
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146	(4) the Adept	42 <sup>2</sup> -5
147-50	The Ninefold Thread—General	42 <sup>6</sup> -43 <sup>10</sup>
151	Mnemonic verse (§§ 73-80)	43 <sup>11</sup> -19

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155	12. Injunction and Fruit	
—	[13. Injunction and Means (see n. 155/4)]	
156	14. Fruit and Means	
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158	16. Gratification	
159	17. Disappointment	
160	18. Escape	
161	19. Gratification and Disappointment	
162	20. Gratification and Escape	
163	21. Disappointment and Escape	
164	22. Gratification, Disappointment, and Escape	

<i>Trsln.</i> <i>Para.</i>		<i>PTS. edn.,</i> <i>p. and line</i>
	<i>3rd Grouping</i>	
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167	25. Belonging to and Dissociated from Worlds	
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169	27. Ripening	
170	28. Action and Ripening	
171	29. Demonstrated	
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174	32. Knowledge	
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176	34. Knowledge and the Knowable	
177	35. Seeing	
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179	37. Seeing and Keeping in Being	
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182	40. Neither Inseparable from the Idea of Ripening Nor Not Inseparable from the Idea of Ripening	
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185	43. Our Own Statement and Someone Else's Statement	
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187	45. Expressed in Terms of Ideas	
188	46. Expressed in Terms of Creatures and Expressed in Terms of Ideas	
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190	48. Agreed	
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195-9	1. Expressed in terms of Greed	60 <sup>6</sup> -61 <sup>16</sup>
200-5	2. " " " Hate	61 <sup>17</sup> -63 <sup>6</sup>
206-8	3. " " " Delusion	63 <sup>7</sup> -64 <sup>15</sup>
209-11	4. " " " Non-Greed	64 <sup>16</sup> -65 <sup>13</sup>
212-16	5. " " " Non-Hate	65 <sup>14</sup> -66 <sup>10</sup>
217-22	6. " " " Non-Delusion	66 <sup>11</sup> -67 <sup>15</sup>
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237	8. " " " Verbal Action	69 <sup>24</sup> -70 <sup>3</sup>
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<i>Trsln.</i> <i>Para.</i>		<i>P.T.S. edn.,</i> <i>p. and line</i>
	<i>The 5 Faculties—Unshared</i>	
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243	12. " " " Mindfulness Faculty	71 <sup>13</sup> -17
244	13. " " " Concentration Faculty	71 <sup>18</sup> -72 <sup>3</sup>
245	14. " " " Understanding Faculty	72 <sup>4</sup> -9
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265-71	ii. Investigation and Construing of Threads by Conditions (begins with <i>Yo ca dhammo . . .</i> )	77 <sup>16</sup> -78 <sup>22</sup>
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274-5	iv. Mixing-Up of Threads	79 <sup>23</sup> -80 <sup>13</sup>
276	Mnemonic verse	80 <sup>14</sup> -16
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279-84	Ways in which the 4 Truths are taught	81 <sup>6</sup> -82 <sup>9</sup>
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286-99	The Ajita Questions and Answers	82 <sup>11</sup> -13
287	The 4 kinds of Question	82 <sup>14</sup> -85 <sup>24</sup>
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309	Summary verse (words " <i>Suttānaṃ . . . to . . . niddiṭṭho</i> ")	88 <sup>2</sup> -89 <sup>6</sup>
310-16	Construing, e.g. that Creatures are actually Corrupted and Purified	88 <sup>3-4</sup>
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	[Concluding Section iv (?) (missing)]	
	[Here insert the verses quoted in NdA. (see Appx. no. 4) (?).]	
	Here insert §§ 569-72 with Conclusion of Chapter VI (displaced backwards in all edns.).	

#### CHAPTER VII.—THE 16 MODES OF CONVEYING IN COMBINED TREATMENT

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649-64	Prose Example (see § 73)	158 <sup>9</sup> -163 <sup>1</sup>
	2. <i>Type of Thread Dealing with Morality</i>	
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688-94	Demonstration of Thread's Meaning—4 Ideas	170 <sup>18</sup> -172 <sup>13</sup>
	3. <i>Type of Thread Dealing with Penetration</i>	
711-31	Verse Example (see § 75)	176 <sup>25</sup> -182 <sup>2</sup>
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733-55	The Thread's Demonstration—Aim (Meaning) of 2 kinds: a man's and a word's. And the 11 Ideas based on Non-Remorse	182 <sup>4</sup> -187 <sup>15</sup>
	<i>4. Type of Thread Dealing with the Adept</i>	
773-95	Verse Example (see § 76)	190 <sup>13</sup> -194 <sup>end</sup>
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796-831	Prose Example (see § 76)	195 <sup>1</sup> -202 <sup>24</sup>
797-817	Demonstration of the Thread—Keeping in Being, and the 5-fold Unsurpassed Keeping of the Faculties in Being	195 <sup>11</sup> -200 <sup>14</sup>
	<i>5. Type of Thread Dealing with Corruption and Dealing with Morality</i>	
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833-5	The Thread's Meaning—3 ways to avoid the "Rain-Soddening" brought about by Concealment of wrongdoings	203 <sup>1-22</sup>
852-78	Prose Example (see § 77)	207 <sup>8</sup> -214 <sup>16</sup>
853-64	The Thread's Meaning—"Dark" and "Bright"	207 <sup>9</sup> -211 <sup>20</sup>
	<i>6. Type of Thread Dealing with Corruption and Dealing with Penetration</i>	
879-900	Verse Example (see § 78)	214 <sup>17</sup> -218 <sup>4</sup>
880-5	The Thread's Meaning—Word-commentary	214 <sup>18</sup> -216 <sup>11</sup>
901-37	Prose Example (see § 78)	218 <sup>5</sup> -223 <sup>14</sup>
902-21	The Thread's Meaning—Action and the Production of Active-Determinations (begins with the word "paccayo . . .")	218 <sup>5</sup> -221 <sup>19</sup>
	<i>7. Type of Thread Dealing with Corruption, Dealing with Penetration, and Dealing with the Adept</i>	
938-60	Verse Example (see § 79)	223 <sup>15</sup> -227 <sup>end</sup>
939-46	The Thread's Meaning—Exhibition of Corruption, Penetration, and Adept	223 <sup>23</sup> -225 <sup>14</sup>
961-86	Prose Example (see § 79)	228 <sup>1</sup> -231 <sup>12</sup>
962-6	The Thread's Meaning—Commentary	228 <sup>3</sup> -229 <sup>5</sup>
	<i>8. Type of Thread Dealing with Morality and Dealing with Penetration</i>	
983-1011	Verse Example (see § 80) (words "Tattha—bhavati") (words "sa nibbuto—Dutiyena padena") (words "saṃyamato veraṃ na ciyatī ti avera—samāropanā")	237 <sup>5-16</sup> 234 <sup>11</sup> -235 <sup>28</sup> 237 <sup>16</sup> -241 <sup>29</sup>
984-92	Demonstration of the Thread—Commentary	
1012-39	Prose Example (see § 80) (words "Pañc'ānisamsā—tehi (sic, but read ni-)") (words "yan ti (sic, but read -yyanti)—samāropanāya bhūmi")	231 <sup>13</sup> -234 <sup>11</sup> 235 <sup>29</sup> -237 <sup>4</sup>



<i>Trsln.</i> <i>Para.</i>		<i>PTS. edn., p. and line</i>
1013-23	The Thread's Meaning—5 kinds of Persons (Note: The 2 examples in the last heading have exchanged places in all edns., and a portion of the verse example is found in the middle of the prose example. Also the whole passage from the word " <i>dutaṃ pesetvā</i> " (239 <sup>8</sup> ) to " <i>mahā</i> " (240 <sup>19</sup> ) is an intrusion, see n. 1002/3.)	
1040	Conclusion	241 <sup>30-31</sup>

## CHAPTER VIII.—THE MOULDING OF THE GUIDE-LINES

(for title of this Chapter see n. 1041/1)

1041-50	Introductory—Craving and Ignorance : the Roundabout (cf. <i>Netti</i> Trsln. § 644) : Craving-Temperament and View-Temperament, Behaviour in Corruption (cf. <i>Netti</i> §§ 645-7), Behaviour in Cleansing : Blunt and Keen Faculties (cf. <i>Netti</i> §§ 669-71) : the 4 Ways	242 <sup>1</sup> -244 <sup>10</sup>
1051-77	<i>The Play-of-Lions Guide-Line</i> (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 672)	244 <sup>10</sup> -249 <sup>8</sup>
1052-69	<i>Unprofitable</i>	244 <sup>13</sup> -247 <sup>8</sup>
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1053	Tetrads abandonable by the 2 Temperaments (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 676)	244 <sup>16-19</sup>
1054	Subsumption of Tetrads (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 675)	244 <sup>20-24</sup>
1055-61	Progressive relationships of Tetrads (cf. <i>Netti</i> §§ 686-96)	244 <sup>25</sup> -246 <sup>6</sup>
1062	Action and Defilement cause the Roundabout (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 673)	246 <sup>7-8</sup>
1063-9	<i>The 4 Directions</i> —Unprofitable (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 697)	246 <sup>9</sup> -247 <sup>8</sup>
1070-6	<i>Profitable</i>	
1070	10 Tetrads under the 4 Ways (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 713)	247 <sup>9-16</sup>
1071	Progressive Fulfilment of Tetrads (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 715)	247 <sup>17-20</sup>
1072-6	<i>The 4 Directions</i> —Profitable (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 724)	247 <sup>30</sup> -248 <sup>21</sup>
1077	Pairing-Off of Tetrads or "Play"—The Plotting-of-Directions Guide-Line (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 739)	248 <sup>22</sup> -249 <sup>4</sup>
1077	The 4 Fruits of the Monk's State are its end, according to the 4 Directions	249 <sup>5-8</sup>
1078-87	<i>The Trefoil Guide-Line</i>	249 <sup>9</sup> -253 <sup>23</sup>
1078	4 Types of Person defined by the 4 Ways (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 741) reduced to 3 Types (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 745)	249 <sup>10-22</sup>
1079	Instruction, etc., graded to the 3 Types (cf. <i>Netti</i> §§ 746-52)	249 <sup>22</sup> -end
1080-5	<i>Unprofitable</i>	250 <sup>1</sup> -251 <sup>3</sup>
1080-1	10 Triads (no. 2 missing in all edns. ; cf. <i>Netti</i> § 753)	250 <sup>1-19</sup>
1082-4	Progression of Triads	250 <sup>20</sup> -251 <sup>29</sup>
1085	Subsumption of Triads	251 <sup>30</sup> -252 <sup>3</sup>
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1087-9	Progressive fulfilment of Triads (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 754)	252 <sup>14</sup> -253 <sup>17</sup>
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1090	The 3 Gateways to Liberation are its end	253 <sup>19-23</sup>

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1091-1100	<i>The Conversion of Relishing Guide-Line</i>	253 <sup>24</sup> -255 <sup>20</sup>
1091	The 3 Types of Person, who were 4 by the 4 Ways, are 2 by the 2 temperaments of Craving and Ignorance (cf. <i>Netti</i> §§ 751-2)	253 <sup>24</sup> -254 <sup>5</sup>
1092-6	<i>Corruption</i>	254 <sup>6</sup> -27
1092	10 Dyads (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 756)	254 <sup>6</sup> -11
1093-5	<i>2 Directions—Unprofitable</i>	254 <sup>12</sup> -22
1096	The 1st 2 Truths (cf. <i>Netti</i> §§ 648-65)	254 <sup>23</sup> -7
1097-9	<i>Profitable</i>	254-255 <sup>11</sup>
1097	10 Dyads (cf. <i>Netti</i> § 757)	254 <sup>29</sup> -255 <sup>4</sup>
1098-9	<i>2 Directions—Profitable</i>	255 <sup>5</sup> -11
1100	Abandoning The Heart-Deliverance due to Fading of Lust and the Understanding-Deliverance due to Fading of Ignorance are its end	255 <sup>12</sup> -20
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1102	9 Root-Terms are Unprofitable and 9 Profitable (see § 11)	256 <sup>5</sup> -12
1103-6	Collation of Root-Terms under Guide-Lines	256 <sup>13</sup> -258 <sup>4</sup>
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1110	<i>The Plotting-of-Directions</i> Guide-Line	258 <sup>15</sup> -17
1111	<i>The Hook Guide-Line</i>	258 <sup>18</sup> -21
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1112	Conclusion of Ch. VIII	259 <sup>17</sup> -19
1113-4	Justification	259 <sup>20</sup> -260 <sup>14</sup>
	Conclusion of <i>Piṭaka-Disclosure</i>	260 <sup>15</sup> -16

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were barely living, closer to dying, that was a real ascetic practice! Ah, people are like people throughout the world.

The only times I would see this old monk was when he came to spend the pansa - the three-month rains retreat - at the monastery where I was living. Then monks from all over Thailand would rapidly rush to this monastery in order to be with the old monk, the Master of this jungle community. Several times a week I would push through the vines, bush and brambles to visit with the old monk. He would have a thermos of hot water on hand, and he would make coffee, which we consumed as we casually discovered and spoke of the topics of the day. Pleasant was he and so informative.

The last time we met, he told me of another odd experience that once completely enveloped him. It reflected on the curiosity of the jungle on a rainy, a somber, a gray-like day. Under a canopy of the near virgin trees, no sky could be seen; light was barely visible. Like ebony. It was so darkly overcast. There was a fine cool mist of rain falling, constantly descending. But the trees seemed alive with the deep and prolonged humming of the hidden cicadas.

The old monk said, "In the *Vestern* part of Thailand rests a *wat*. But whether *gut* or not, I leave to you. This monastery's locale is in a valley whose magnificence is possibly unequalled in the entire kingdom. It is inhabited by three, no, four of my nation's German monks. The abbot was a real Berliner! He had resided there then more than twenty years. As in *der* other Western-controlled monasteries in Thailand, Thai monks come often by and to spend the pansa. It is such a novelty to them to spend the three months in a Western community that earnestly practices meditation.

"Now, in Wat Buddha Dhamma, for the last several pansas, the Thai monks came to stay. But they would go *vertzig*, crazy. Frequently, this is something that happens. People just go crazy. Why so *vertzig*? It is because *der* valley in which the monastery lies, according to every Thai, it is haunted. No! Thai monks will not go down into that valley alone. Not at night. They have deep respect for the Western monks, thinking that

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